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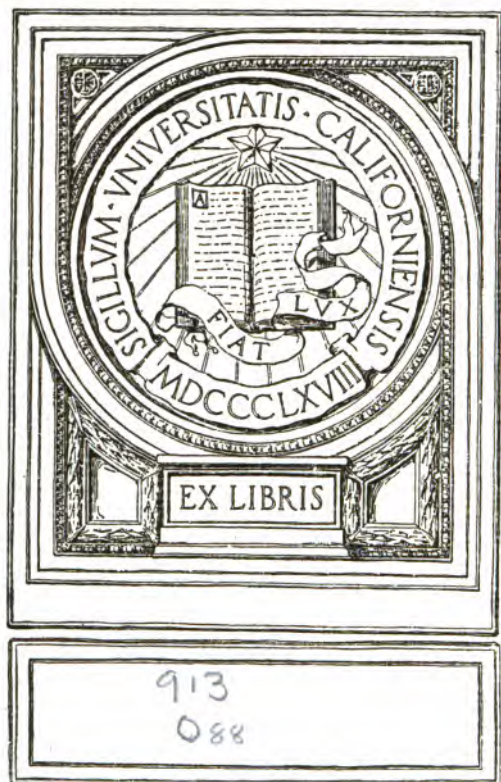
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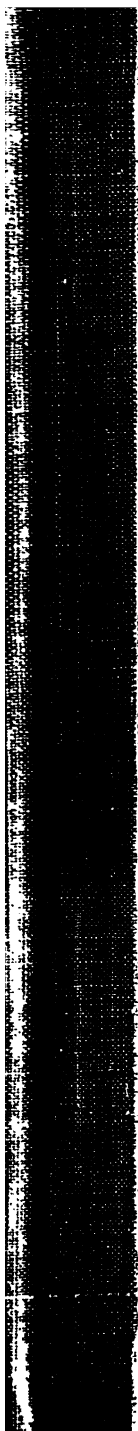
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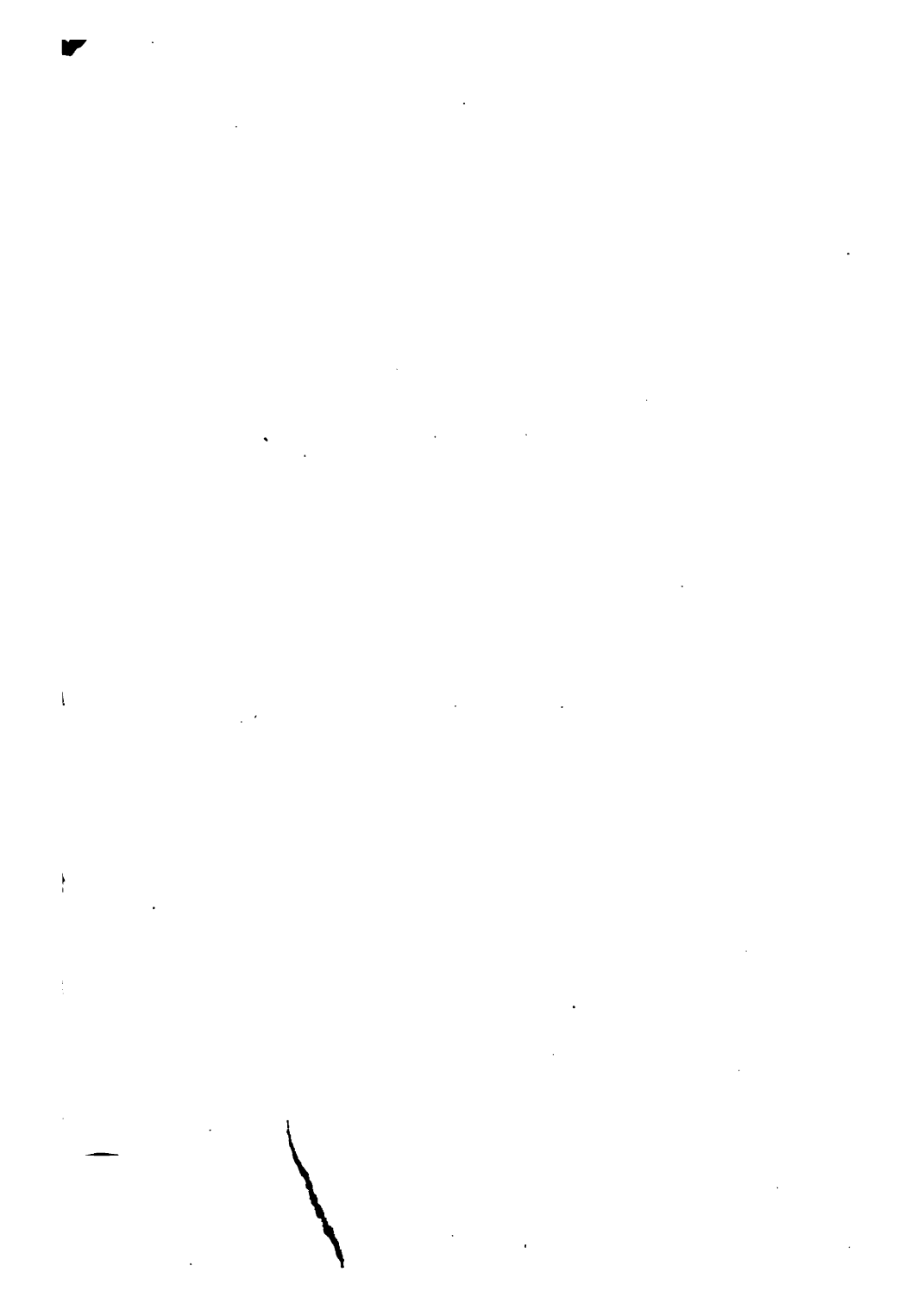
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RECON







AMERICAN VERSE

1625—1807

AMERICAN VERSE

1625—1807

A HISTORY

BY

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New York



THE
PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

1909

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Published, February, 1909

TO VINU
ABBOFLAO

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TO MY WIFE

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PREFACE

AMERICAN verse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries begins with the "Nova Anglia" of William Morrell, published in 1625, and ends with the publication of "The Columbiad" in 1807. The work of the "Hartford Wits," a typical eighteenth century literary coterie, culminates in "The Columbiad," a poem revised and elaborated from "The Vision of Columbus," published in 1787. The present work includes all important American verse between 1625 and 1807 which is worthy of note because of its connection with American history, or because of the light which it throws upon the social and intellectual characteristics of the time.

To facilitate the interpretation of the "zeitgeist," or spirit of the time, the poems have been arranged chronologically, so far as practicable, and according to subject-matter. The latter plan is wholly new and is, the author believes, the only method in which the interpretive value of early American verse can be fully realized. The artistic value of the verse of this period is,

on the whole, of course small, though even here there is much more beauty of imagination and workmanship than is generally supposed. But its principal value is that of historic and social interpretation, and while the author has given some attention to literary criticism, his chief purpose has been to obtain a more intimate view of the life and thought of the time. Hence his attitude has been sympathetic and appreciative rather than purely critical.

A proposition which the following pages will attempt to maintain, is the proposition that seventeenth and eighteenth century American verse in general is not imitative, servile, and unoriginal. The generally accepted idea that early American poets have served merely as mental flunkies to British Drydens and Popes is as absurd as it is false. The briefest acquaintance with the actual works themselves is sufficient to disabuse the mind of any such prejudice. Unfortunately, however, the works are difficult of access and the idea that they are weak imitations of British originals has been fostered and propagated by critics of romantic temper who have seen few of the poems themselves, and whose sole claim to infallibility has been in their knowledge that the majority of the works were written in heroic

couplet and therefore irrevocably damned. It is true that in form the poems are, for the most part, imitative of the prevailing English literary fashions, but such imitation is not confined to America nor to poetry. Moreover, originality of thought and of character is often coincident with conventional dress and the poets of seventeenth and eighteenth century America have seized upon the contemporary literary models of the mother country to express their own individual and original thought. The present work will attempt to prove that in subject-matter, in thought, and in spirit, early American verse is, as a whole, characteristic of the broad, fresh, original, and liberty-loving nature of the land which gave it birth.

Much of the material included in these pages has never before been mentioned in any history or bibliography of American verse. Kettell, in his "Specimens of American Poetry" published in 1829; Griswold, in "The Poets and Poetry of America," 1842; Duyckinck, in the "Cyclopedia of American Literature," 1855, and Stedman and Hutchinson's "Library of American Literature," contain many of the biographies and a few selections from the poems of some of the authors here discussed. Moses Coit Tyler, in his excellent "History of American Literature

during the Colonial Time," 1878, and in the monumental "Literary History of the American Revolution," 1897, emphasizes the prose rather than the verse of the period. His method is to minutely criticise the few and he omits many important works altogether, an omission which was inevitable, however, owing to the greater breadth of his field of research. But the works above mentioned, with the exception of Tyler's, are rather biographical than explanatory and interpretive, and, moreover, they have entirely omitted many of the longer and more important works of American verse.

These omitted poems have been located as rare copies in our oldest libraries. An exhaustive search has been made through the best two existing collections of early American verse, the collection in the Lenox Library in New York City, and the Harris collection in the Brown University Library at Providence. For any material which was not contained in these two collections other libraries were searched, among them being the Astor, Columbia, and New York Historical Society libraries, the Harvard Library, the Boston Public Library, and the libraries of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenæum, and the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester. A great mass of new ma-

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terial was discovered, much of which upon final revision was thrown out as unworthy of record. Much was retained which it is hoped will prove of value in the manner already outlined.

To Mr. Victor Hugo Paltsits, New York State Historian, and Mr. Wilberforce Eames of the Lenox Library I am deeply indebted for the many courtesies extended and for their aid in all matters bibliographical. To Miss S. G. Ross of Brown University I am under great obligation for her unfailing patience in the work among the files of the Harris collection. I wish, also, to make grateful acknowledgments to President John Huston Finley and to Professor Lewis F. Mott of the College of the City of New York for their kind encouragement, and to Professor Francis Hovey Stoddard of New York University for valuable advice and suggestion.

W. B. O.

NEW YORK CITY,
January, 1909.

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AMERICAN VERSE

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL VERSE

TWO years after the *Mayflower* dropped anchor in Plymouth harbor, and while the Pilgrims were still struggling to establish themselves in a new country, a second company under the command of Captain Robert Gorges came to America and attempted to form a settlement at Wessagussett. In this party was a clergyman of the Church of England, William Morrell, who bore a commission from the Ecclesiastical Court, authorizing him to exercise the power of superintendence over all churches which might be formed in the colony. After the failure of the settlement at Wessagussett, Morrell came to Plymouth and there lived for a year as a quiet observer of the new country and its inhabitants. From all accounts he was a very kindly and unostentatious man, not deeming it necessary to disclose his identity to the colonists, who remained ignorant

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AMERICAN VERSE

of the importance of his commission. Returning to England he published, in 1625, his "Nova Anglia" in Latin hexameter with a free translation in heroic couplet. As verse the Latin deserves more praise than the English paraphrase, for, as Professor Tyler has truly observed, the scholars of that day were frequently more proficient in the dead languages than in their own native tongue. Here, as in a great portion of early American verse, interest centers rather in the subject-matter than in the style. We do not expect and do not ask for art. People were too busy in those early days of New England to devote much time to literary revision. Though their sternly repressed love of the beautiful frequently found vent in versification, the verses are almost without exception accompanied by a note of apology. To write verse at all was to tempt fate; to revise it was sheer madness. But though the colonial bards, under the influence of a gloomy theology, gave little heed to the subtle beauties of art, their verses are not entirely destitute of merit. They have one quality which, for our purpose, is more valuable than any other,—a certain rugged frankness and sincerity. They saw clearly and spoke with conviction. If they imitated the literary forms of the mother country it was rather be-

cause such forms were handy than because of any servility inherent in their natures. Their independence of thought and fearlessness of utterance were often astonishing. Moreover the colonists were keen observers and they were in the habit of recording political, social, and economic conditions with minuteness and with pithy commentary. It is from the historic, rather than from the artistic point of view, that early American literature should be examined.

That Morrell was the first to sing the praises of New England is indicated in the opening lines of the "Nova Anglia":

"Feare not poore Muse, cause first to sing her fame,
That's yet scarce known, unlesse by Map or name;
A Grand-childe to earth's Paradize is borne,
Well lim'd, well nerv'd, faire, rich, sweete, yet for-
lorne."

With the pardonable pride of one who has seen what others have not, Morrell describes the wonders of the new land. A careful observer, he is impressed with the tremendous potential wealth of the country. After describing, with occasional quaint little touches, the products of the earth and of the water, the fish, the fowl, the animals of the forests, the author comments upon the appearance, habits, and religion of the

natives. It is difficult to realize the degree of wonder which the American Indian inspired in the first settlers. Columbus had taken a few with him upon his return to Spain and Pocahontas had been in England. There were innumerable stories and descriptions of them current in Europe, but these served in no way to diminish the amazed interest with which the voyagers for the first time beheld the red man in his native haunts. Pocahontas probably did not cross London Bridge with greater astonishment than Morrell felt when he first beheld American savages in the forests of the New World.

Morrell had been but a sojourner, a looker-on in the Plymouth colony. Some years later a descriptive and historical account of New England in verse was written by one vitally interested in the success or failure of the little settlement, its second governor, William Bradford. Like Morrell, he also is interested in the natural productions and in the history of the country, but that which really arouses him is not so much the wonders of physical America as the spiritual state of his parishioners. It is the note which is to dominate American verse for a hundred years.

“And truly it was a glorious thing,
Thus to hear men pray, and God’s praises sing.”

After praising Danforth, Hooker, and other prominent ministers of the time, and after noting with satisfaction the increase in the number of churches, his mood suddenly changes and becomes gloomy with anticipated evil:

“Methinks I see some great change at hand,
That ere long will fall upon this poor land;
Not only because many are took away,
Of the best rank, but virtue doth decay,
And true godliness doth not now so shine,
As some while it did, in the former time.”

Evidently Satan had already sent his emissaries to Plymouth. It is rather amusing, looking back from the luxurious twentieth century, to find Bradford imagining signs of decay and degeneracy in that hardy little band of Pilgrims. It is characteristic of the Puritan to think his own age more wicked than any which preceded. Such a belief ministers to him in two ways; in stimulating his love of battle with the forces of the devil, and in the emotional excitement caused by contiguity to the awful and impending realities of the day of doom, the last judgment, and eternal damnation.

But although Governor Bradford looked gloomily upon some of the conditions in the colony, not all of his little flock were thus af-

✓ fected. There was one member who was enthusiastic about all he saw or experienced in "that Vineyard of the Lord." The "Good News from New England" was published in London in 1648. The identity of the author has been lost, except that he is known to have been a resident of Plymouth Colony. A good portion of the tract is in verse and is one of the most curious and charming of the few productions of this early period. Both the thought and style are colored with a distinct individuality. The story is told in rollicking anapests and with an infusion of sly Chaucerian humor rare in Puritan productions. Perhaps, like Morrell, the author had been but a sojourner in the colony. After a short but unique and witty preface, the poem begins by telling of the reasons why the people transplanted themselves and their families to those remote parts. The narrative continues with an account of the transportation of people and goods to the Massachusetts Bay and other adjacent colonies, of the arrival and disembarkation, with a description of the climate, animals, and natural productions; of the building and giving out of lands, of the officers and government of the colony, and finally of the various kinds of preachers in America. The poem should be of considerable value to the his-

torian, but of especial value to the historic novelist, because of the wealth of vivid detail. The description of the embarkation, where many idlers have come to see what all the commotion is about, is real and picturesque:

“ What meane these madmen soone sayes one, witless to
run away,
From English beere, to water, where no boone companions stay.”

Then follows what is perhaps the best part of the poem, a description of the stormy voyage of the *Mayflower*. It is as if we ourselves were passengers on the famous little craft, so clearly is it all told. The description of the interior of the vessel, the character analysis of different members of the little band with their reasons for joining the company, the occupations on board, the trials and sufferings owing to the rough weather and the hot and stuffy little cabin, the diseases which are contracted, the birth of children, etc., are all told with graphic realism. The solemnity and loneliness of the landing of the Pilgrims is described, and then follows one of those vivid pictures of New England winter so many of which antedated and finally culminated in “Snowbound.” The “Good News” was written twenty-eight years after the found-

ing of the colony, and in the meantime our author had learned to love the country and to have unbounded faith in its possibilities.

"No parallell like this (I deeme) you'l finde in any Nation."

The tract closes with an exhortation, in prose, urging all merchants, seamen, husbandmen, and manual laborers to come to New England, as the benefits accruing thereby will be substantial.

Nearly forty years later, in 1686, and only four years after William Penn came to America, ✓ John Holme wrote "A True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania," probably the earliest metrical composition written in the Quaker colony. His account is even more glowing than that contained in the "Good News from New England." Holme was not much of a poet. Even his grammar is often at fault. And yet there are few efforts at versification in seventeenth century America more quaint and interesting than this metrical description of early Pennsylvania. John Holme had a mind of his own. He was something of "a character." He was born in England, and in describing the lusciousness and abundance of colonial cherries, remarks:

"I never saw so many but in Kent."

Coming to Pennsylvania in 1685, he raised himself, notwithstanding his deficient education, to a position of some prominence, and was finally made a justice of the County Court. He wrote the "True Relation," so he says, to disprove certain false reports which he thought were keeping settlers away from the colony. Instead of a place to be shunned it is, on the contrary, a veritable Arcadia. He finds only one fault with it,—the sudden changes of the weather.

"Here's many say they bless the day
That they did see Penn's wood;
To cross the main back home again,
They do not think it good."

And again his enthusiasm breaks forth in the lines:

"Nay when you come and have our country seen,
Then you will be like unto Sheba's Queen,
Who, when to Solomon she did resort,
To know the truth of what some did report,
She did confess that what she did behold
Was more by half than had been to her told."

The author's remarks "In Praise of Quakers," "The Worst of Pennsylvania," "Inhabitants," "The Laws," "Of Schools," "Of the Author," etc., are most interesting and valuable. The

poem abounds in quaint and original lines, as in the description of the Indians

“ whose skins do look
as black as bacon dried in smoke.
. . . what clothes they wear are quickly made,
They do not help the tailors’ trade.”

And again, under “Inhabitants,” he writes:

“ Here are some Scots who think no shame
To own the country whence they came;
But I do think they have more wit
Than ever to return to it.”

Whatever we think of John Holme as a poet, he was, at least, entertaining, vigorous, and a good advocate.

It will be seen that the earliest verse of New England had to do, for the most part, with general social and industrial conditions in the different colonies. With child-like wonder, too, the poets of those times were inspired by the strange sights of a new world. But ere long more definite events began to shape themselves to which the attention of the bards was directed. A decade before John Holme wrote “A True Relation,” Benjamin Tompson,¹ “Mortuus sed

¹ Benjamin Tompson was born at Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1640. He graduated at Harvard in 1662.

Immortalis," the "learned schoolmaster and physician" and the first native-born American poet, wrote what has been called the first American epic, the "New England's Crisis."¹ The crisis referred to is the one which was threatening the very existence of the colonies,—King Philip's War, and from internal evidence it is clear that the poem was written while the war was actually in progress. The Indians, who had been for a long time restless at the encroachments of the settlers, had at last, in 1675, combined under Massasoit's brilliant son, King Philip, for a concerted attack against the whites. The Prologue of the poem is an admirably clear picture of the earliest days of New England, of

"The times wherein old Pompion was a saint,
When men fared hardly yet without complaint,
On vilest cates; the dainty Indian maize
Was eat with clamp-shells out of wooden trays,
Under thatch'd hutts without the cry of rent,
And the best sauce to every dish, content.

.

From 1667 to 1670 he was master of the public school in Boston and later in Charlestown. He is buried in Roxbury and upon his tombstone is inscribed "Ye Renowned Poet of New England."

¹ The date of the first edition of the poem is not definitely known, but probably was in 1676. The only original copy known is in the library of the Boston Athenæum.

" 'Twas in those days an honest grace would hold
Till an hot pudding grew at heart a cold.
And men had better stomachs at religion,
Than I to capon, turkey-cock, or pigeon;
When honest sisters met to pray, not prate,
About their own and not their neighbour's state.

.

" 'Twas long before spiders and worms had drawn
Their duncy webs, or hid with cheating lawne
New England's beautyes, which still seem'd to me
Illustrious in their own simplicity.
'Twas ere the neighbouring Virgin-Land had broke
The hogsheds of her worse than hellish smoak."

Here again, it will be noted, is evidence of the Puritan characteristic, remarked in Bradford, of turning back with longing to the past, to the brave days of old as something bigger and better than the degenerate present. The Prologue, which is by far the best part of the poem, closes with a direct reference to the "Crisis" itself:

" New England's hour of passion is at hand,
No power except divine can it withstand.
Scarce hath her glass of fifty years run out,
But her old prosperous steeds turn heads about,
Tracking themselves back to their poor beginnings,
To fear and fare upon their fruits of sinnings."

Then follows a description of the campaigns and incidents connected with the war. The forest marches, the storming of palisade forts, the burning of villages are pictured with an abundance of detail which could have been obtained only through propinquity and personal knowledge. The "Supplement"¹ of the poem, after lamenting "this silence of Harvardine quills" which can allow whole towns and churches to be consumed "without the pitty of an elegy," continues in a narration of the fate of the towns of Marlbury, Providence, Seaconk, and Chelmsford. The many allusions to mythology and ancient history would seem to justify the use of the epithet "learned" on the tombstone at Roxbury. The poem is of some historic value for the light it throws on Indian methods of warfare, and in this connection it is interesting to note that the high-mindedness which Cooper claims to discover in the American Indian is altogether lacking here. In Tompson's conception the enemy are but cruel and bloodthirsty savages. This difference in attitude can of course be partially explained by the fact that while Tompson viewed them in an attitude of open hostility, Cooper, on the other hand,

¹ This supplement of eight pages is sometimes called "New England's Tears."

had grown up with them as his friends and companions.

Thus far our attention has been confined almost entirely to Massachusetts. "A Brief Account of the Agency of the Honourable John Winthrop,"¹ New London, 1725, by Governor Roger Wolcott, ushers in that long list of writings which was to make Connecticut renowned in the early literature of America, and which was to culminate, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, in the brilliant literary coterie known as the "Hartford Wits."

In a day when self-made men were the rule, Roger Wolcott, with almost no education other than that which he could pick up for himself, rose through the successive stages of legislator, Deputy Governor, and Chief Judge of the Superior Court, to the office of Governor of the Colony of Connecticut. Among his other accomplishments he had considerable local celebrity as a poet. His chief production was an account, in heroic couplet, of John Winthrop's "Agency" in 1662, in London, when his hero presented himself before Charles the Second and "obtained for the Colony of Connecticut His

¹ Published in the volume entitled "Poetical Meditations, being the improvement of some Vacant Hours," New London, 1725.

Majestie's Gracious Charter." After the usual court preliminaries Winthrop is presented to King Charles, and having first prostrated himself gives, with the King's permission, an account of the history of Connecticut and evidence that the colony has achieved sufficient growth and distinction to be rewarded with a colonial charter. The author has considerable dramatic instinct, and throughout the entire recital, even in the most exciting portions of the account of the Indian troubles, the main situation is sustained, nor does Wolcott forget for a moment that it is Winthrop who is telling the story, and that the latter is in London before the King and surrounded by court dignitaries. At the close of the speech to the King, Winthrop makes a formal petition for a royal charter.

"Great Charles who gave attention all the while,
Looking on Winthrop with a Royal Smile,"

then replies:

"Be it so then, and We our Self Decree,
Connecticut shall be a Colony."

Winthrop is then appointed governor and Mason lieutenant-governor of the new colony.

Wolcott had some power of description. The story of the first voyage of the colonists and the

description of the fear and wonder with which the Indians viewed the ship as it came to anchor in the mouth of the Connecticut River is well done. The description of the flora and fauna of Connecticut is suggestive of John Holme's poem on Pennsylvania, though the earlier poem is more imaginative. That the influence of the then prevailing literary models in England was already beginning to be felt in America is shown in Wolcott's verses. Just as Anne Bradstreet had seen fit to place the nightingale in the forests of Massachusetts, so Wolcott hears the song of "Philomel" along the streams of Connecticut. The literary phenomenon which is characteristic of eighteenth century American verse as a whole, the combination of native strength and classic influence, is illustrated in these lines from Wolcott's poem:

"And Yellow Lilies fair Enameled,
With Ruddy Spots here blushing hang the Head."

The subserviency to classic models exemplified in the first, is more than compensated by the native beauty and originality of the second, of the above lines.

Historically the poem is of value because of the story of early Connecticut which it contains, particularly that part dealing with the Pequot

War and the troubles with the Indians. Unlike Tompson, Wolcott sees something of nobility in the red man. He is described as fighting gallantly, with pride and spirit. When "A Brief Account of the Agency of the Honourable John Winthrop" was published, something over a century had elapsed since the landing of the Pilgrims. Much is contained in this poem of the history which had been making in America since that cheerless winter's day in 1620.

King Philip's War had inspired the first American epic, the "New England's Crisis." The French and Indian Wars, which extended with intervals of peace from the destruction of Montreal by the Iroquois in 1689 to the Peace of Paris in 1763, were the inspiration of much of the American verse of that period. War has ever been a subject of poetry,—especially of minor poetry. It is objective and lends itself easily to narrative and to picturesque description where the thought and imagination of the great poet is less essential. Chief among the many poems dealing with the French and Indian Wars are those of Samuel Niles,¹ John Maylem, and George Cockings. Each of these writers was

¹ Samuel Niles was the first graduate of Harvard College from Rhode Island. Later he was pastor of an Indian Church in Rhode Island.

inspired by the brilliant victory over the French at Louisburg,¹ a siege in which Roger Wolcott had taken a conspicuous and honorable part. Niles's poem, published in New London in 1745, the year of the siege, is entitled "A Brief and Plain Essay on God's Wonder-working Providence for New England in the Reduction of Louisburg." The poem has little merit, although there is an occasional touch of quaintness, as in the following lines of the introduction:

"My Pen, and Skill, fall exquisitely short,
To give the World, an adequate Report
Of what high work was done, in wondrous wise,
By Providence, both on the land, and Seas,
In this great action, which I here relate,
'Gainst Cape-Breton, and of the Frenches fate."

¹ "It was considered no slight degree of honor to have been concerned in this Louisburg affair. The French, after the peace of Utrecht, built this town to secure their navigation and fisheries, and the advantages it gave their privateers over the English were very great. It was surrounded with a rampart of stone, thirty-five feet high, mounting 150 cannon, a ditch eighty feet wide, and was protected on the sea side by two batteries of 30 guns each. The entrance on the land side was by a drawbridge overlooked by a semicircle of 15 cannon. Twenty-five years and thirty millions of livres had been expended in the erection of the city, and its capture by the New England militia, under Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, was one of the most daring exploits on the records of American history. Less than 4000

In these lines, as in the title itself, we have the key to the spirit of the poem. The English succeeded in the reduction of Louisburg only because they were Godfearing men, and because they were removing "Popish idols" and had the purpose

"On Papal Ruines to Erect Christ's Throne."

The poem closes with an appeal to the soldiers to be pious and to refrain from swearing.

If Niles had a modest regard for his own poetic gifts, not so with John Maylem,¹ who

troops with twelve or thirteen small vessels, completed the armament against the Dunkirk of America. The town was attacked, the French driven from their external batteries, and for fourteen nights successively, the forty-two pounders of the enemy were dragged through a morass by the soldiers with straps over their shoulders, they sinking to their knees in mud at every step. In six or seven weeks the city yielded, though it was fully furnished for a siege of as many months. The money afterwards granted by Parliament to defray the cost of this wild undertaking, was brought to Boston and paraded through the street. There were seventeen cart-loads of silver, and ten of copper, amounting to £200,000." Samuel Kettell in "Specimens of American Poetry," Vol. I, p. 19.

¹ John Maylem is mentioned in no cyclopedia of American biography with the exception of Drake's "Dictionary of American Biography." He was a poet of Boston, born in 1691. For a while he was a resident of Halifax, Nova Scotia. He died at Newport, Rhode Island, though the

styles himself "Philo-Bellum," with what Professor Trent has aptly characterized as "an unruly bellicosity."¹ His two poems, "The Conquest of Louisburg" and the "Gallic Perfidy," were both published in Boston in 1758. The former is in imitation of "Paradise Lost" and is an account of the British victory under Boscawen and Amherst. It is poor verse, but there is a martial swing to some of it which indicates that the author was not entirely without that spirit which his pseudonym implied. It has, at least, the negative value of being free from the ludicrously extravagant passages which disfigure the "Gallic Perfidy." The latter poem, which is of interest as a literary curiosity, illustrates the pranks which the Muses will sometimes play with the Bottoms of verse. Witness the opening lines:

"Enough! I rave!—the Furies rack my brain!
I feel their influence now inspire my Song!
My lab'ring Muse swells with the raving God!
I feel him here! My Head turns round! 'twill
burst!

date of his death is uncertain. Allibone is wrong in ascribing his death to the year 1742, as the Conquest of Louisburg did not occur until 1745.

¹ "A History of American Literature," New York, 1903. Page 91.

So have I seen a Bomb, with living Train,
(Emitted from a Mortar) big with Death,
And fraught, full fraught with Hell's Combustibles,
Lay, dreadful on the Ground, then with a Force
Stupendous, shiver in a thousand atoms!
But on, my Muse!"

After this extraordinary outburst the poet becomes calmer, and begins to narrate in a not altogether unentertaining manner some passages of personal experience following the French violation of the treaty after the capitulation of Fort William Henry. The author, then a boy, is captured by the Indians, taken to Montreal, and afterwards redeemed. In the general destruction which follows the violation of the treaty he escapes but is captured by "three brawny Savages." Three times the Indians plan to kill him "and thrice the over-ruling God withheld." He becomes one of fifty captives, and finally arrives at Montreal after "Seven Days and Nights of Horror." The poem closes with a promise to

"play the man and chase
The wily Savage from his secret Haunts."

In pursuance of this resolution the following program is outlined:

" Not Alpine Mounts shall thwart my rapid Course;
I'll scale the Craggs, then, with impetuous Speed,
Rush down the Steep, and scow'r along the Vale;
Then on the Sea-Shore halt; and last, explore
The Green Meanders of eternal Wood!"

The longest, the most popular, and in some respects the worst of these abortive attempts to immortalize in verse the events of the French and Indian Wars was written by George Cockings.¹ It is called "War; an Heroic Poem." The poem is in eight books and consists of one hundred and ninety pages of heroic couplet. Five editions were necessary to satisfy the popular demand for this work. In those early days in America, when books were less plentiful than now, and when more time could be given to the perusal of a single volume, there was a tendency to estimate the value of publications as much by their quantity as by their quality. A ponderous bulk was deemed worthy of all consideration, and the seriousness and scope of the author's effort were taken into account almost as much as

¹ George Cockings was born in Devonshire and held a small place under the British Government in Boston. He wrote most of his poems and dramas after his return to England, where he lived for thirty years after his experiences in America. He was Registrar for the Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce at Adelphi. He died in 1802.

his actual accomplishment. The first edition of this poem, in 1760, treats of the French and Indian Wars "from the taking of Minorca, by the French, to the Reduction of the Havannah, by the Earl of Albemarle, Sir George Pocock, etc."; the second edition, published in Boston in 1762 with amendments and additions, carries the narrative to the raising of the siege of Quebec. The circumstances of writing the poem, as set forth by the author in the preface, are of some interest: "I wish I could keep pace, in smooth lines, and a nervous diction, with all the heroic actions performed by the matchless warriors of the three nations. I don't pretend to be a first-rate Poet; perhaps may never deserve the title of a Poet. But I am conscious of my writing truth (without flattery), unadorned with poetic diction, (which like a nauseous daubing, on a beautiful face, hides the sweet attractive smile, and native simplicity of the features:) and I designed the poem for the honour of my King and Country. I am no writer by profession, but at my leisure hours, wrote the Siege of Louisbourg, in the winter of 1758, in Newfoundland, to amuse myself and friends; and had no thoughts of printing it. But in the great, and ever-memorable year of fifty-nine, so repeated and rapid, were our conquests, both by sea, and land,

in Europe, Africa, and America; so often came news of our successes from every port, (like gunpowder, when touched by the match), my fancy took fire! the rapt'rous joy grew too great to be contain'd within bounds! and I thought among the rest, I would add my share of applause, and strive to register in the book of fame the heroic actions performed by our Troops and Tars."

The first lines of the poem are sufficient to show that Maylem had found a rival:

"When I at first poetic ardour knew,
And big with martial themes, my Bosom grew
From pregnant fancy."

Cockings had wished to write his poem in "nervous thund'ring diction." The reality is tame, with very little thunder. Each of the eight books is preceded by a lengthy argument which, together with the historical detail in the poem, may be of some value to the student of research. As poetry the verses have almost no value. The French and Indian Wars had lasted for nearly seventy-five years. Two years before the Treaty of Paris in 1763, by which the French formally withdrew from the continent of North America, Nathaniel Evans wrote an "Ode on the Prospect of Peace," which rehearses, in somewhat pomp-

ous verse, some of the events of the war and concludes with a picture of peace and good will.

Fifteen years elapsed after the close of the troubles with the French before the colonies were again sufficiently aroused to inspire historical verse of importance. In the meantime, Great Britain by her oppressive policies was slowly kindling that fire of revolution which was to flame out at Lexington on the historic April morning in 1775. The idea of political separation from the mother country had grown slowly in the minds of the colonists. When once it had reached a certain point, however, it spread with wonderful rapidity. Not only did it inspire the hero, but also the poet to arms, the one with his flint-lock, the other with his verses, while more than often the two were combined. Naturally the greater part of the verse written in America immediately preceding and during the war of the Revolution is of a satirical nature. Such will be included under "Political and Satirical Verse." But there are a number of poems written at this time which, by their more general tone and more purely historic temper, deserve to be classed under historical verse.

Two years after the Declaration of Independence Rev. Wheeler Case,¹ Pastor of the Presby-

¹ Sometimes called "Whitfield" Case.

terian Church of Pleasant Valley, Dutchess County, New York, published in New Haven a volume of poems, a number of which have a certain epic unity. These poems all have to do with Burgoyne's ill-fated expedition, his defeat and fall, his lamentations, etc. The verses have little merit, though the lamentations of Burgoyne are amusing and almost witty. Was it because he was a churchman, or because he was so thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of the cause, that the Rev. Wheeler Case ascribed the whole victory of the American arms at Saratoga to the interposition of the Great Jehovah?

"An Eulogium on Major Gen. Joseph Warren,—by a Columbian,"¹ a twenty-page pamphlet in heroic couplet, was published in Boston in 1781. It is a rehearsal of the events leading up to the Battle of Bunker Hill, a description of the battle itself, and words of praise for the unfortunate hero of the day. Whoever the author was he was something of a poet. The poem is in the form of a well-sustained metaphor in which the threatening dangers of the war are likened to storm clouds and storm, where .

"Awful Franklin walk'd the stormy sky
And pointed rapid lightnings where to fly!"

¹The identity of the author is unknown.

In the same year George Cockings published anonymously in London the last of his ponderous epics, "The American War," a poem in six books. The opening verse illustrates the author's always ambitious design:

"Of arms I sing and trans-atlantic war."

Evidently Cockings's experiences in America had been pleasant ones, for, though an Englishman by birth, residing in England at the time of the American Revolution, and a loyal supporter of the King, he yet aims at and for the most part succeeds in recording an unprejudiced account of the trouble in the colonies. "In the following work," he says, "I have studiously avoided entering into political disquisitions; arraigning neither the conduct of the ministry, nor the revolutions of the continental leaders, in this unhappy contest with the North American colonies. My design has been to relate authenticated facts, with candid observations on the bravery displayed on either side. Let us hope the time is not far distant when the powerful motives of religion, language, consanguinity, commerce, and mutual interest will once more unite us against the perfidious Family Compact of the House

of Bourbon;" or, to quote from the poem itself:

"Political discussions I disclaim;
Historic truth is my determined aim."

He avoids those "degrading epithets" which are characteristic of most of the political verse of the day, and only once, when he indulges himself at the expense of the defeated Frenchmen who, with the Americans, had attacked Savannah, does he swerve from his commendable purpose of being non-partisan. From earliest times in America, on through the causes of the Revolution, the beginning of open hostilities, the expedition against Canada, the appointment of Washington as Commander-in-Chief, the battles of White Plains, Trenton, Bennington, Germantown, etc., the poem proceeds, finally concluding with the unsuccessful attack against the fort and town of Savannah. Here again, as in his poem on the French and Indian Wars, there is an attempt at historic accuracy. Copious notes accompany each page, and here again, also, the style at which Cockings aimed,—nervous, sublime, and full of martial glow, is a lamentable failure.

Covering almost the same historic ground as Cockings's poem, but distinctly partisan in spirit and with a patriotic fire and dash, is George

Richards's¹ "Zenith of Glory"² published from time to time in the *Massachusetts Magazine* from 1789 to 1792. Six years had passed since the signing of the treaty of peace by which England had recognized the independence of the colonies, yet the sounds of the battle trumpets were still echoing:

"Our Fathers rose—they rent the grave,
Their trumpet tongues arouz'd the brave,
And sounded wide the alarm;
Whilst the dread accents filled the sky;
'Revere our dust—Unite or die,
Rise—scorn oppression's arm.'"

In the "Columbian Muse," a selection of American poetry published in New York in 1794, is printed one of the earliest poems of Joel Barlow. It is entitled "American Revolution" and is a metrical review of some of the events of the war. Sophomoric in tone it has little indication of that talent which was later to

¹George Richards was pastor of a Universalist Church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from 1793 to 1809. Later he went to Philadelphia, where he established the *Free-masons' Magazine and General Miscellany*, which he edited for two years. He died in Philadelphia in 1814.

²Not all of the poem was published from the manuscript. The published portion comprises 300 stanzas (1800 lines) printed in eighteen monthly instalments.

produce the very creditable "Hasty Pudding." The following year, 1795, Richard Snowden's poem "The Columbiad"¹ in thirteen cantos, was published in Philadelphia. The author aimed to give a complete "epitome" of the American War, ending with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. One canto is devoted to an exposition of the characters of the chief patriots and is of some interest, but as a whole the poem is a long and dull recital of historical events, relieved by no oasis of original conception or beauty of expression. The phrasing, moreover, is conventional to an excessive degree.

The first woman to write an extended poetical account of the War of Independence was Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton,² she whom Robert Treat Paine, Jr., had helped to bring into prominence by denominating "The American Sappho." At that period the appearance of a woman in literature was still enough of a curiosity to insure at least a temporary popularity, and gallantry had not yet deteriorated to the point where the critic could attack, with impunity, the productions of a

¹ There are several "Columbiads" in American verse.

² Mrs. Morton was a frequent contributor to the *Massachusetts Magazine* under the signature of "Philenia."

female muse. The professional book-reviewer was almost unknown in America during the eighteenth century. The few press notices of new publications were usually brief and laudatory. Real criticism depended upon two things; the notice which prominent men, preacher, or author, or statesman, took of the work, and whether or not there was a demand for a second edition. When Mrs. Morton published, in Boston, in 1797, the first book of "Beacon Hill" she intimated that a favorable reception would insure the publication of succeeding books of the poem. "In the unpublished portion, I have written," she says, "of the noble enthusiasm of the gallant Lafayette, the heroic and impassioned adventures of Lady Harriet Ackland, the tragic fate of the unfortunate Miss McCrea, and the pathetic perils of the young and accomplished Asgil." Evidently the poem did not meet with the popularity for which the author had hoped, for although the fact that she was a woman defended her work from attack, that fact did not, however, insure for her a popularity strong enough to warrant the printing of the unpublished portions of the poem. In choosing the name "Beacon Hill" the author had in mind "that the great events, which form the subject of the piece, originated within the

view of this interesting eminence." The poem is dedicated "To the Citizen-Soldiers, who Fought, Conquered, and Retired under the Banners of Washington and Freedom." A description of the surrounding prospect is given, and the mythological deities invoked. The action opens with the retreat of the "Columbians" from Bunker Hill and the death of Warren, followed by the Siege of Boston, and an apostrophe to the progress of Freedom throughout the world. The verse is conventional. The public was right in not demanding the publication of the succeeding books of the poem. In this poem, as in many others of the Revolutionary period, the phenomenon is encountered of a long list, almost a mere catalogue, of the prominent soldiers and statesmen of the day. The first impulse is to condemn this in no measured terms. A second thought, however, inclines toward leniency. At a time when men were surcharged with patriotic emotion, a name was sufficient to set it aflame, just as in a great political convention the mere mention of the favorite candidate is the signal for applause. In such poems the mention of each famous patriot gave an emotional thrill which passed for poetry.

Little more than such a list of names is the poem entitled "The Progress of Freedom,"

Greenfield, 1798, by James Elliot,¹ in which are mentioned the heroes and martyrs of liberty from earliest times to Washington. As a relief from the monotonous swing of the heroic couplet his tetrameter stanzas are acceptable. In the same year, 1798, there was published in Boston Miss Anna Seward's very interesting "Monody on Major André." In that the author was an intimate personal friend of the unfortunate André, the poem has a special value. The personality of this handsome young British officer must have been unusually charming if we may judge from the references to him in the literature of the day, which are full of the highest praise and admiration. Miss Seward's poem has an added interest in that three of André's letters to the author are appended.

It is doubtful if ever in history did the death of a single man call out from a nation such universal and deep sorrow as that which took possession of the hearts of Americans when George Washington died. Party differences were forgotten and all united to do honor to the memory of one whom Henry Lee declared was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." The reverence and semi-adora-

¹ James Elliot was a citizen of Guilford, Vermont, and a non-commissioned officer in the United States Army.

tion with which his contemporaries regarded this man was one of the striking phenomena of the Revolution and of the years immediately following. In a day when party conflict was bitter, and when men had not yet learned to be tolerant of an opponent's honest opinion; when the vilest epithets were hurled about upon the slightest provocation and in a manner which no modern political manager or editor would dare; from all this Washington escaped practically unscathed. It is true that after the Ratification of Jay's Treaty, in 1795, by which Americans were compelled to pay all debts due to British subjects, a treaty which the President had formulated and defended, Washington's popularity waned temporarily, and he was attacked in the newspapers as if he had been "a common pickpocket,"—to use his own words. But the people quickly saw and repented their mistake. The other great leaders, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Jay, and Hamilton, were all attacked in the political pamphlets and verse of the day, and in the most unqualified terms. None but Washington appeared to be free from these contaminating pens. Even his greatest political enemies mentioned his name with a word of respect and as one too great to be dragged into vulgar political controversy. When such respect was offered to the

living Washington, it is not difficult to conceive of the tremendous wave of grief which swept over the country at his death. Not until sixty-six years later, when the news was flashed across the startled country that Lincoln had been assassinated, was there to be anything like another such universal outpouring of sorrow. And in each instance the first poignant grief was assuaged by the literature which sprang up to commemorate the event. In each instance hundreds of eulogies were immediately published.¹ Of the poems that were written on the death of Washington, it is hardly necessary to say that no single one approaches by far the power and pathos of "O Captain! my Captain!", the greatest of the Lincoln eulogies, and yet almost without exception they express a genuine grief and are intensely earnest and sincere.

Of these many eulogies some are better known than others.² Three of the most widely circulated were eulogies by Richard Alsop, David

¹ The Lenox Library in New York City has a special department devoted to Washington eulogies. It is probably the best existing collection.

² It should be noted here that what is the best of all the eulogies on Washington is by Benjamin Young Prime, and is a part of a larger poem called "Columbia's Glory." See "Political and Satirical Verse."

Humphreys, and Charles Caldwell. "A Poem Sacred to the Memory of George Washington," by Richard Alsop, was published in Hartford in 1800. It is adapted to the twenty-second of February, and is dedicated to Mrs. Martha Washington "as a small tribute of esteem to her virtues, and a testimony of individual sympathy in her affliction and the public misfortune." It is a review of Washington's services to his country and an eulogy on his character. Although Alsop was really much affected by Washington's death, still his poem savours somewhat of a literary exercise rather than a spontaneous outburst of grief. A better poem is that of David Humphreys, which was read at the House of the American Legation, in Madrid, on July 4th, 1800, that day being the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Independence of the United States. This, too, is dedicated to Mrs. Washington, and is outlined much as is Alsop's eulogy, a description of the civil and military campaigns followed by a glowing estimate of his personality. Several pages each are devoted to his early life and to his career subsequent to the Declaration of Independence. By far the greater part of the poem is concerned with the military exploits and it is of interest to note the author's reasons for assigning such a large portion of his verse

to this feature of Washington's career. It is "because the splendour of the late warlike achievements in Europe has, in a manner, eclipsed all the martial glory that had preceded, so that the events of our revolutionary war are in danger of being unknown to posterity." Napoleon was at this time the head of France. Even across the Atlantic, it seems, had the gigantic shadow of this man been cast. The closing part of the poem has almost the effect of a chorus, and is worthy of considerable praise. In it Humphreys rises to a height he seldom attained. A shorter poem on the death of Washington was written by Charles Caldwell,¹ Philadelphia, 1800. Part had been previously circulated in a hand-bill, but its popularity induced the author to have it printed in pamphlet form. In this poem the English language is exhausted for words of praise. Its popularity no doubt rested upon the public belief that the phrasing of superlatives did not imply exaggeration when used to describe the character of the First President.

But there was one countryman, at least, in

¹ A native of North Carolina. Born in 1772. In 1810 appointed Professor of Natural History in the University of Pennsylvania. Died in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1853.

whose heart Washington did not hold first place. Under the signature of "A Farmer," he published in Portsmouth in 1802 "The Historic Progress of Civil and Rational Liberty," a fifty page poem in octosyllabics. He must have been a person of some consequence, for both the poem and the notes give proof of unusual learning. The poem is dedicated to John Adams, the "Patron of Freedom." After abundantly eulogizing Adams, and placing him higher than Washington, the author launches into an historical sketch of liberty from Marathon to Yorktown, and closes with denunciation of Faction and praise of Order. As poetry it is of little value. Its chief characteristic is its undoubted learning.

Isaac Hillard, "a poor old man, and a sincere friend to the Constitution of America," as he signs himself in his "Apology," cannot boast of that learning which was the happy possession of the "Farmer." On the contrary, he is very ignorant, so much so indeed, that he cannot always write correctly. And yet, his "Short Poetical History of Fragments," Danbury, 1803, is not without a certain quaint and curious interest of its own. Of this work the author remarks: "Concerning the following history it has been in agitation for 5 years past, and as the subject-

matter happened to turn up I sat down and made some observations." And in a poetical preface he says:

" Nothing entitles me to poet,
And I've just sense enough to know it.
I went to the poetic fair
In hopes to buy some knowledge there,
But the great poets there had sent
And bought it all before I went,
So without wit, or sense, or knowledge,
(Just like some fool that's been to College)
I will set out in my careers,
To tell what's happened of late years."

The poem relates some of the leading events which brought on the War of the Revolution, how the war was conducted, and the attitude of different nations towards America since she obtained independence. There is a crude but strong imagination in the poet's metaphor of the new nation as a ship, and how the ship has been commanded, and by whom, and a particular description of the voyages she has made under different commanders. Notwithstanding his lack of education, Hillard managed to learn no inconsiderable amount of current political history. The homely humor of the piece, moreover, adds to its interest as an antique.

The verse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in America in general was not retrospective. The poets as a rule were too much engrossed with the stirring events of the present to take mental excursions into the centuries preceding,—a temper which requires the leisure and isolation of the student. We have traced their impressions of the history which was in process of making around them; impressions of the earliest colonial conditions as recorded in the verse of such men as Morrell, Bradford, and Holme, accounts of the Indian troubles as narrated by Tompson and Wolcott, of the French and Indian Wars in the verse of Cockings, Maylem, and Niles, and of the Revolutionary Period in a rapidly increasing number of versifiers. But still there were a few with the inclination to sing of things comparatively remote. "The Benefactors of Yale-College," by one who had evidently been a student there, recounts the early history of that institution. Men connected with the College like Dummer, Watts, David, Tompson, Hopkins, and Berkeley, that "prodigious man," are among the benefactors of the college. Others are Aristotle, Newton, and Homer. It is worth noting that evidences of college spirit are not lacking in this poem. At a time when athletics were almost unknown in the

few American educational institutions of the day, we find here a pride in Yale's mental triumphs as strong in its way as that expressed by the college yell in a modern football contest. In 1784 Freneau wrote a poem in anapests called "Sketches of American History." Beginning with the earliest times before the discovery of America, it carries the history to the settlement of Plymouth, Rhode Island, and New Amsterdam. Freneau's satirical temper, which the Treaty of Peace the year before had not entirely cooled, finds an outlet here in a savage attack on the Puritans. In Francis Hopkinson's "Poems," published in Philadelphia in 1792, is a poem called "The Treaty," inscribed to the honourable Thomas and Richard Penn, proprietors of the province of Pennsylvania. The poem was written upon the banks of the river Lehigh, in the year 1761, when the author served as secretary in a conference held between the government of Pennsylvania and the chiefs of several Indian nations. It is in praise of William Penn. A contrast is drawn between the old antagonism of the Indians and whites and the present attitude of peace. The former condition is illustrated by the story of the tragic death of the captive Rosetta and her lover Doris; the present peace-

ful time by an account of the Treaty in which the Indians come

“To meet in love their Christian brethren there.”

The poem ends with a vivid picture of an Indian war dance. Under the pen name of “Philagathos,” Ezra Stiles, at that time President of Yale College, published in Boston in 1793 a pamphlet poem of sixteen pages in elegiac stanza entitled “A Poem Commemorative of Goffe, Whaley, and Dixwell.” These men were three of the judges of Charles the First, who, at the Restoration, took refuge and died in America. An abstract of their history is prefixed to the piece. The poem, which can have no claim to consideration apart from its historical connection, is both an eulogy and an elegy on the above men.

It is not surprising to find that in these earlier days many American works receive their initial publication in London. The connection between the mother country and the colonies was close, and there was much going and coming between the two. But we scarcely expect to find American literature as far east as India. And yet “The Speech of Caunonicus, or an Indian Tradition,” by John Lathrop, was first published in

Calcutta in 1802, being reprinted the following year in Boston. Lathrop, a native of Boston, after graduating at Harvard in 1789, studied law and was admitted to the bar, but directed his chief energy to teaching and writing. In 1799 he decided to try his fortunes in British India, where he founded a school in Calcutta. In 1819 he returned to America and died the following year at Georgetown. While he was on the voyage to India he wrote "The Speech of Caunonicus." It is addressed to Richard, Marquis Wellesley, K.P., Governor and Captain General of India, and is preceded by a long discussion of the settling of New England by the Pilgrims. The "argument" gives a brief outline: "Caunonicus, Sachem of the Narragansetts, having reached his eighty-fourth year, and finding his infirmities daily increasing, assembled his people around the council fire, and previous to the act of resigning his authority to his nephew, delivered an address, in which he informed them of their nature, origin, and approaching fate. The time when this relinquishment of his office took place was a little anterior to the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620. The venerable chief lived to witness the accomplishment of some of his melancholy predictions." Lathrop cannot be classed very high as a poet, and yet he used the

couplet with more than ordinary ease, and there is a dignity in his lines which suits well the traditional character of the Indian Chief.

The poem is of some value from the wealth of Indian tradition presented. Especially interesting is the red man's conception of creation,—how, before man and woman were created, God fought with the gigantic Mammoth for supremacy and how the latter was slain by a thunderbolt from heaven. The “melancholy predictions” which Caunonicus makes at the close of the poem are to the effect that another race is to succeed to that of the Indian,—the white man's race,—and that one of the chief causes of the failure of the Indian to maintain his supremacy on the American continent will be the “Fiend Intemperance.” How far the old Sachem's prophecy was fulfilled the twentieth century bears witness.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS VERSE

IN 1626, just one year after the "Nova Anglia" of Morrell was published in London, William Vaughan, at that time residing in Newfoundland, wrote "The Golden Fleece," a bulky work of some three hundred and fifty pages. About one-sixth of the book is in English verse and as such forms the first distinctively religious poem written in America. Vaughan, who was a native of Wales, and who had attained some local distinction there as a poet, had purchased land in the southernmost part of Newfoundland and had located there on a plantation which he called Cambriol. Like the "Good News from New England," the "Golden Fleece" is an attempt to encourage emigration to the New World. There is a bitterness in it which is lacking in the other poem, and which suggests that the author's experiences in his native Wales may not have been entirely pleasant. Not content with presenting the advantages to be gained by a residence in America,

the poet vehemently attacks almost every phase of English society. Puritan and Yankee, he is interested both in the salvation of souls and in the increase of material prosperity. Through the "Errours of Religion," the "Vices and Decays of the Kingdom," he proceeds to the "Ways to Get Wealth and Restore Trading." Vaughan styles himself "Orpheus Junior," but he did not succeed in coaxing forth any very classic strains. The preliminary pugnacious and rather effective "address to the uncharitable readers or deriders of our Golden Fleece" and the curious parody on the Litany in the Second Part, may be read with considerable interest. That the author had his admirers is indicated by several complimentary stanzas by various persons. Historically "The Golden Fleece" is of importance in the light it throws upon the social and economic conditions of the day. The author was shrewd and clever, and there is a saving grace in the satiric alertness of the book. This cannot, however, be said of his "Church Militant," London, 1640, an interminably long and dull history of the Christian Church "from the Yeare of Our Saviour's Incarnation 33 until this present, 1640."

"The Authour here my Noble Lord acquaints

What Paths they tread who lead the lives of Saints,

What Comforts he shall finde, what good success,
While he walks in the New-mans Diocesse."

This poetic history is divided into seventeen chapters or ages of the church, closing with a picture of the ideal, the "True Catholick and Apostolick Church." It is undoubtedly true that the poet of Cambriol had read widely in ecclesiastical history, especially among the theologians of the Middle Ages, but how anything short of an uncanny piety could have sustained even a Puritan through these three hundred and fifty soporific pages of heroic couplet is a mystery. It is indeed very doubtful if our ancestors sat down to the perusal of such works with that smacking anticipation with which they are generally credited. They no doubt enjoyed a goodly portion of it, enough certainly to give them a reputation for endurance among descendants whose chief literary pabulum is the short story, and yet we are inclined to think that even to the Puritan more than enough was a sufficiency, and that they waded through such dull affairs as "The Church Militant," not so much because they enjoyed them, as because they looked upon the performance in the light of a penance and as a proof of sanctity.

"A Song of Sion," by John Grave, "a gen-

tleman of Virginia," was published in 1662, the same year with Michael Wigglesworth's popular epic "The Day of Doom," and in its general tone is strongly suggestive of the latter poem. "The Song of Sion" is one of the very few sacred poems produced in the southern colonies; "The Day of Doom" is the precursor to a long series of religious works written in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. It is not surprising that in Virginia and the South there should be a paucity of material in this special department of American verse. The Cavalier of Virginia and the Puritan of Massachusetts were widely differing types. The one was an adventurer, a seeker after excitement, wealth, and pleasure; the other despised these things as trappings of the Devil, and through penitence and prayer sought only to keep a clear conscience before his Maker. To the Cavalier religion was largely a matter of tradition and convenience; to the Puritan it was a matter of eternal life or death. The Virginian expressed himself in histories, annals, and practical works on colonization. The colonists of New England, as we have seen, were wide awake and were interested observers of local conditions, but to men who were willing to sacrifice everything

for the privilege of religious freedom, it was but natural that the literature in which they expressed themselves should be of a tone prevailingly religious.

The Puritans, believing as they did that they were their brothers' keepers, after the death of King James had attempted to convert the Virginians to Puritanism. But Governor Berkeley and the more prominent Virginians were Episcopalians. They looked upon the Puritans with as great disfavor as upon the Roman Catholics. Severe laws were enacted against them and they were driven out of Virginia. Many of these exiles found a home in Maryland under Lord Baltimore, where, in 1649, was passed the Maryland Toleration Act, the first in the history of America, although Roger Williams some years previously had established religious freedom in Rhode Island. The Puritans of Maryland, however, were not so active as their brothers in New England, and they have left little record in the literature of the time. With the exception of "The Song of Sion" it is doubtful if, in our period, another poem with the true Puritan ring can be found south of Mason and Dixon's line.

Massachusetts was the great stronghold of Puritanism, and here it was that "a little

feeble shadow of a man" ¹ sang lustily of the terrors of an avenging God. What "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is to the prose, so "The Day of Doom" is to the verse of Puritanism. The author, Michael Wigglesworth, was for many years pastor of the church at Malden. "The Day of Doom" was first published in 1662, and leaped at once into what was then in America an unexampled popularity. Eighteen hundred copies were sold within a year.² The poem went through eleven editions,³ and for a century continued to be the most popular book in New England. That it epitomized the religious belief of the time is scarcely open to question. That our forefathers shuddered with pleasure in thus contemplating the terrors of the Judgment Day is more than likely. With the usual note of apology which has been remarked in the verse of the day, the author thus introduces himself in the address "To the Christian Reader":

¹ Cotton Mather thus speaks of Wigglesworth in his funeral sermon preached at Malden, June 24, 1705.

² "Considering the population and wealth of New England at that time, this shows almost as remarkable a popularity as that of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'" John Ward Dean in *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, April, 1863.

³ For the dates and place of publication of the various editions, see "Memoir of the Author" by John Ward Dean in "The Day of Doom," New York, 1867.

“Reader, I am a fool,
And have adventured
To play the fool this once for Christ,
The more his fame to spread.
If this my foolishness
Help thee to be more wise,
I have attained what I seek,
And what I only prize.”

“The Day of Doom” is a story told with broad imaginative sweep and virile power. If Wigglesworth had applied himself to poetry with that singleness of purpose which characterized his ministerial career, there is little doubt that he might have attained some more permanent fame as a singer. The poem opens with the fancied security of the sleeping sinners after a night of revelry. Many a greater poet has written a worse stanza :

“Still was the night, serene and bright,
when all men sleeping lay;
Calm was the season, and carnal reason
thought so 'twould last for aye.
‘Soul, take thine ease, let sorrow cease;
much good thou hast in store.’
This was their Song, their Cups among,
the evening before.”

At midnight there is a great noise, which rouses
the sleepers:

“For at midnight breaks forth a light,
which turns the night to day,
And speedily an hideous cry
doth all the World dismay.
Sinners awake, their hearts do ache,
trembling their loins surpriseth;
Amaz’d with fear, by what they hear,
each one of them ariseth.

“They rush from beds with giddy heads,
and to their windows run,
Viewing this light, which shines more bright
than doth the noon-day Sun.
Straightway appears (they see’t with tears)
the Son of God most dread,
Who with his Train comes on amain
to judge both Quick and Dead.”

God, “exalted high upon a lofty throne,” calls
aloud for the dead to arise and come to judgment. The sepulchres open and the dead come
forth and gather around the throne. “Winged
hosts,” too, fly over the land forcing to come to
the dread tribunal “those creeping Moles that
hid themselves for fear.” As they come up, the
“Sheep,” which are the righteous, are placed
upon the right hand, and the “Goats,” “all

whining Hypocrites," upon the left. At last all are assembled:

"Fast by them stand at Christ's left hand,
the Lion fierce and fell,
The Dragon bold, that Serpent old,
that hurried Souls to Hell.
There also stand, under command,
legions of Sprites unclean,
And hellish Fiends, that are no friends
to God, nor unto Men.

"With dismal chains, and strongest reins,
like Prisoners of Hell,
They're held in place before Christ's face,
till He their Doom shall tell.
These void of tears, but fill'd with fears,
and dreadful expectation
Of Endless pains and scalding flames,
stand waiting for Damnation."

God does not judge hastily. With patience he listens to the pleas of the wicked. But his decisions are inexorable. Only once does mercy season justice, and this in the case of the babes who died without salvation. To these he pityingly assigns "the easiest room in hell." The wicked are all finally condemned and sentenced to be cast into the Lake of Fire:

“ Whom having brought as they are taught
unto the brink of Hell,
(That dismal place, far from Christ's face
where Death and Darkness dwell,
Where God's fierce Ire kindleth the fire,
and vengeance feeds the flame,
With piles of Wood and Brimstone Flood
so none can quench the same,)

“ With Iron bands they bind their hands
and curse'd feet together,
And cast them all, both great and small,
into that Lake forever,
Where day and night, without respite,
they wail, and cry and howl,
For tort'ring pain which they sustain
in Body and in Soul.”

All of this is said to be unnecessarily severe, if not actually ferocious, and yet it is hardly more so than “Paradise Lost.” But there is another side to the picture not often presented. Not only the pains of the wicked, but also the joys of the blest are pictured by Wigglesworth. If the fate of the sinners is a hopeless fate, it is such rather because of the rigor of the Puritan creed, than because the author himself was blood-thirsty. As a matter of fact it is doubtful if a more kind-hearted and sympathetic soul existed

in New England than Michael Wigglesworth. He was known for his gentle manners and for his love for all living creatures. He was once called "a man of the beatitudes."¹ If "The Day of Doom" exemplifies the merciless justice of a harsh religion, the "Postscript to the Reader,"² which follows the poem, is full of the pleadings of a tender heart. As one brother to another he pleads that all may live such a life that there need be no fear of the Day of Doom. It is tender, passionate pleading. Gentleness and severity are characteristic, also, of "God's Controversy with New England,"³ a poem written the same year, 1662. Two years before, Charles II had been "restored" to the throne of England and was already threatening Puritan Massachusetts with the abrogation of its colonial charter and a restriction of privileges. It was a year of great drought, moreover, and these things appeared to Wigglesworth as signs of divine wrath against the people of New England. The poem is in four parts, each part distinguished by a change of meter. In the first are described the virtue and happiness of the

¹ By the Rev. Dr. Peabody.

² Thirteen pages of heroic couplet.

³ First printed from MS. in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1871.

earlier New Englanders; in the second "from above with awfull voice" God is heard warning against a continuation of sin; in the third part the author points out the manifold evils and disasters which are falling upon New England because its people have not heeded the voice of God; in the last of the four parts there is a sudden and characteristic turning from denunciation to gentle and kindly admonition. There is some good verse in "God's Controversy with New England," but it lacks that originality, force, and picturesqueness which makes the "Day of Doom" the most remarkable poem of seventeenth century America.

In Wigglesworth's "Common-place book" under the entry of September 17, 1669, is this item: "I have been long employed in a great work composing poems about the Cross. I have already found exceeding much help and assistance from Heaven, even to admiration." The work referred to is his poem called "Meat Out of the Eater; or, Meditations Concerning the Necessity, End, and Usefulness of Affliction unto God's Children. Also tending to Prepare them For, and Comfort them Under the Cross." The one hundred and forty-one pages of mixed meter which comprise the poem are divided into different sections under the headings of "Songs,"

"Meditations," etc. Each thought or sentiment has its biblical prototype given in references at the side of the page. There are many quaint conceptions scattered throughout the poem; for instance, one of the divisions is characterized as "Riddles unriddled, or Christian Paradoxes Broke open, smelling like sweet Spice, new taken out of Boxes." A devout and kindly spirit breathes through the poem. For many years Wigglesworth himself had suffered bodily affliction which at times incapacitated him for pastoral duty, and this fact lends additional weight to his thoughts on the "necessity, end, and usefulness of afflictions unto God's children." Through it all he is cheerful and optimistic. The final lines of the poem give the general tenor of the whole:

"Be cheerful, Suffering Saint,
Let Nothing cast thee down;
Our Saviour Christ e're long will turn
Thy Cross into a Crown."

✓ With the exception of "The Day of Doom," Wigglesworth's shorter poems are his best work. The poems "Eternity" and "Vanity of Vanities" are worthy of careful reading. The latter poem would not be out of place in an anthology of American poetry.

Peter Folger, like Wigglesworth, attributes the evils of the time to divine displeasure. Because the law has seen fit to trammel liberty of conscience in the persecution of the Quakers and Anabaptists, punishment has followed in numerous Indian massacres.

“The enemy that hath done this,
are very foolish men,
Yet God doth take of them a rod
to punish us for sin.”

The author aptly calls his poem “A Looking Glass For The Times,” (1675), and in it is reflected the religious fanaticism of the seventeenth century. Folger, who was a surveyor of Nantucket, and the maternal grandfather of Benjamin Franklin, was himself considered a godly man, yet his judgment is in no way warped by over-zeal, and he speaks with a frankness and fearlessness which might well have made trouble for him in those hot-headed days of religious persecution. Considerable courage was necessary in writing such stanzas as these:

“Indeed I count it very low,
for people in these days
To ask the rulers for their leave
to serve God in his ways.”

"I count it worse in magistrates
to use the iron sword,
To do that work which Christ alone
will do by his own word."

"The Church may now go stay at home,
there's nothing for to do;
Their work is all cut out by law,
and almost made up too."

"A Looking Glass For The Times" is thus a spirited appeal for religious liberty and freedom of conscience, just as a century later American verse recorded the demand for civil and political liberty. The poem has the usual jerky style, but if not beautiful it is at least forceful, and it should ever be kept in mind that the correct view-point from which to judge early American verse is historic rather than æsthetic. Franklin, in the "Autobiography," makes the remark that his grandfather had written other things, but that "A Looking Glass For The Times" was the only one which he had seen in print. So far as is known, only the one poem was ever published.

Prominent among the different types of Puritan composition must be reckoned the elegy. What is perhaps the greatest of all personal elegies had been written by one of the greatest

of Puritans. To a type of mind which persists in contemplating the present life merely as a period of preparation, the actual passing to what is believed to be the real life beyond exerts a powerful fascination. To such a mind the death of a good man is not only not depressing, but is often even a source of poetic exaltation. Of the many elegies written in America during the seventeenth century, those by Urian Oakes and Cotton Mather are most worthy of note. President Oakes, of Harvard, in 1677, wrote his well-known "Elegy on the Reverend Thomas Shepard."¹ The stanza which he employs is a pleasing variation from the verse forms then prevailing, and the poem itself gives proof that the author was gifted as a poet not less than as a scholar. In fact the elegy at times rises to the dignity of high Lycidian passion. For deep and sincere feeling over the death of a friend, it would be difficult to match the last two of the following lines:

"My Dearest, Inmost, Bosome-Friend is Gone!
Gone is my sweet Companion, Soul's delight!
Now in an Huddling Crowd I'm all alone,
And almost could bid all the World *Goodnight*."

¹ Thomas Shepard was born in London in 1634. He came to New England with his father in 1635. In 1659 he was ordained teacher of the church in Charlestown.

Urian Oakes himself, who died in 1681, is the subject of the first of the two elegies written by Cotton Mather, and first published in Boston in 1682. Mather was the most prolific writer of his time, but, with a very few exceptions, his works are in prose, the elegies mentioned being the only poetical compositions of any importance. The second of the two poems is entitled "An Elegy on The Much-to-be-deplored Death of That-Never-to-be-forgotten Person, The Reverend Mr. Nathanael Collins,"¹ Boston, 1685. The first is in heroic couplet, the second in elegiac stanza. The author laments the meanness of his verses, which took only "a few stolen hours," while Virgil thought eleven years insufficient work upon the *Æneid*. Disclaiming any ability or inclination in the writing of verses Mather says he has composed because of "a sense of duty, awakened by the invitation of others." This most erudite man of his time is in truth not much of a poet. His verses are unlike anything in the seventeenth century. Far inferior as poetry to the elegy written by Oakes, there is, however, an individuality about Cotton Mather's verses which holds the attention.

¹ Collins for many years was pastor of the church in Middletown, Connecticut. He died in 1684.

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They are curious, quaint, and far away. He laments thus upon the death of Oakes :

“ O that my Head were waters, and mine Eyes
A fountain were, that Hadadrimmon's Cryes
Might bubble from me ! ”

and when Collins dies and he is hastening to the house, he sees Pity

“ Set in the midst of swoons, and sobs, and shrieks.
With Bowells full of it I hastened to
The Wet place, asking why she grieved so.”

Though many of Mather's conceptions are amusing, we feel, nevertheless, behind and through it all a dominant personality which commands respect.

Dr. Benjamin Colman, pastor of the Brattle Street Church, Boston, attained some recognition as a poet with his very creditable “ Poem on Elijah's Translation,” Boston, 1707, occasioned by the death of Mr. Samuel Willard, the Boston minister and Vice-President of Harvard College, a poem in which Willard's life is likened to that of Elijah. With the exception of one or two minor compositions, the poem before us is the only one which Colman wrote. The versification is smooth and the description of the heavenly

ascension is unusually good. "An Elegy on the Death of The Reverend Jonathan Mayhew,"¹ Boston, 1766, by Dr. Benjamin Church, the well-known Boston physician, poet, and satirist, although coming much later in point of time, may be mentioned here as having attained sufficient elegiac dignity and sincerity to warrant passing notice.

The "Poetical Meditations, Being the Improvement of Some Vacant Hours," by Roger Wolcott, was published in New London in 1725. It is really a series of poems, paraphrases of Scripture for the most part, and comments on certain scriptural texts. The poem lacks finish, but has a rugged vigor which accords well with the character of him who, because he knew how to improve his vacant hours, had risen from poverty and obscurity to the first place in the Colony of Connecticut. Wolcott's phrasing is sometimes startlingly original, as for example: "Impurpled in his Crucifixion."

With traces of the still potent influence of Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom" is "The Conflagration" of Mather Byles,² a description

¹ Jonathan Mayhew in 1747 was ordained pastor of the West Church in Boston. He continued in this pastorate until his death in 1766.

² Mather Byles, 1706-1788. Pastor of the Hollis Street

of the Judgment Day when the world will be consumed by fire. Wigglesworth's chief interest is polemic, while Byles is interested rather in the physical phenomena, the roar and glare of the conflagration itself. In both poems there is an admirable contrast drawn between the calm and serenity preceding and the terror following the summons to judgment. Byles wrote a number of poems, most of which were published in a single volume in Boston in 1744. Of these "The Conflagration" was the best known and most widely admired. In this poem, as in the shorter poem, "The Comet," there is an imaginative sweep commensurate with the breadth of subject. In "The Comet" the author is lost in a mood of awe and wonder, where theology is temporarily forgotten. Only at the close does he suddenly remember the lesson of the Comet, which

" Warns every creature thro' its trackless road,
The fate of sinners, and the wrath of God."

In speaking of the Reverend John Adams¹ in the preface to his "Poems," Boston, 1745, a

Church, Boston. Noted as a wit. Pope corresponded with him. Of strong Tory convictions, which later made him unpopular.

¹ 1705-1740. A Harvard graduate. For a time pastor of

friend remarks: "As long as learning and politeness shall prevail, his sermons will be his monument, and his poetry his epitaph." The sermons have vanished and the poetry is not read, although the poems are by no means without their good points. If somewhat crude in movement, they at least give evidence of a cultured mind. The author's two most sustained efforts were "A Poem on Society" and "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." The former is a poem in three cantos. Society begins with the Trinity, the "mysterious Three." Canto First discusses the society of inanimate nature and of animals; Canto Second treats of the society of domestic life, and Canto Third of the society of friendship. Secular in subject, the poem is religious in tone. A spirit of piety breathes through the work. There is some attempt at a philosophy of society, but it fails to expand beyond the narrow confines of the Puritan ideal. "The Revelation of St. John the Divine" is an almost literal paraphrase, in heroic couplet, of the entire book of Revelation. Our forefathers were almost as fond of toying with the Scriptures as of expounding them. Paraphrase, acrostics, and, after the days of Mather, even

a church in Newport, Rhode Island. Died at Cambridge. Noted for his eloquence.

puns based upon biblical text, were looked upon as legitimate, and openly indulged. No doubt there was a certain pleasure in thus seeing old friends in a new habit. The taste for the beautiful, too, could here be satisfied without that danger to piety which secular art implied. Chief among the reasons why the Puritans affected to despise art was the fact that Italy and Spain, the centers of art, were hotbeds of Romanism, and again because of their own self-consciousness, introspection, and inability to objectify. Almost the first crude attempt at sacred art had been the Bay Psalm Book printed in 1640. For over a hundred years this halting and imperfect rhyme had satisfied the Puritan taste. At length, in 1752, there was published in Boston John Barnard's "New Version of The Psalms of David; Fitted to The Tunes used in the Churches." The demand for a new version of the Psalms is thus stated by the author in the Preface:

"Tho' the New England version of the Psalms of David, in metre, is generally very good, and few of the same age may be compar'd with it, yet the flux of languages has rendered several phrases in it obsolete, and the mode of expression in various places less acceptable; for which reasons an amendment, or new version, has been long and greatly desired by the most

judicious among us. After long waiting for the Performance of some more masterly pen, and upon repeated desires, I have ventured to employ all the spare time of near upon the last three years of my advanced age in composing a new version, suited to the tunes used in our churches, which, by divine assistance is now finished. My great care has been to keep as close to the original as I could without a literal translation." Rev. Mather Byles gave valuable assistance to the author in the final correction and proof-sheet revisions. Barnard's verses are incalculably better than the verses of the Bay Psalm Book. In this fact, as also in the demand for a better version, is shown the slow growing emancipation of literary taste in America.

With the publication of "Poems Moral and Divine," by an "American Gentleman,"¹ London, 1756, a new field is opened to the religious poets. The first spirited attack is here made against the growing skepticism and infidelity of the day, an attack which was to be continued by many and abler pens and with increasing strength of bitter invective during the closing years of the eight-

¹ Identity of author unknown. The editor remarks that the author was intended for a "Mechanic Business" and therefore he had "no other education than what a country School Mistress could bestow upon him."

eenth century. In the growth of inductive science and in the development of the spirit of inquiry, Puritanism had at last met a doughty foeman. Heretofore the Bible had been accepted literally and without question. The so-called "higher criticism" was unknown. The Quakers had been persecuted because of their effrontery in daring a personal interpretation of the Scriptures, curiously enough the very reason why the Puritans themselves had separated from the Church of England. To interpret and differentiate was one thing, however; to deny the essential truth of the Scriptures was something entirely different, and it was this latter climax of sacrilege which sent the Puritans in furious onslaught against Doubting Castle. Unfamiliar as they were with the weapons of their opponents, the descendants of Edwards and Wigglesworth for a time made a sorry mess of it. They went forth to the attack armed only with the sword of the spirit into a battle where thorough mental preparation was most essential. "Modern Infidelity; or The Principles of Atheism Exposed and Refuted," one of the poems "By an American Gentleman," illustrates the general characteristic of the first Puritan attacks upon Atheism,—a superabundance of assertion in combination with an almost total lack of argu-

ment. The whole question is so clear to the author that he considers argument unnecessary. Vehemence is mistaken for force. In the preface to "Man's Fall and Exaltation; or, The Christian Triumph, a Poem in Seven Cantos," the same writer attacks those who "split their wit upon Scripture Passages with great zeal and alacrity." The poem is partly a Bible narrative and partly scriptural exposition. The interest of each of these two poems lies wholly in the subject-matter and point of view.

In the same year that the Boston Tea Party was summoning the Gods of War to the wharves near Faneuil Hall, there was printed in Boston, not far from the Cradle of Liberty itself, a peaceful little book filled with the spirit of brotherly kindness. "The Sacred Minister," Boston, 1773, by Samuel Mather, is an attempt, in blank verse, to present the true qualifications for Christian ministry, together with the minister's manner of life and death in the pursuit of his sacred profession.

"Behold! a feeble Genius would select
A subject more adapted to his Thoughts;
He sings the Minister of Things Divine.
To shew, how he should be prepar'd and form'd;
What Piety and Learning should him fill,

And how These should be drawn to Exercise;
How he should live and how expend his Time;
How, or in House or Desk, he should discourse,
And how he worthily should quit the Stage."

The five parts of the poem treat successively of the minister's internal piety, his knowledge and learning, his preaching, as to the matter and manner of it, his virtuous and useful life and conversation, and his manner of finishing the ministry and life. It is a noble ideal which Mather draws, an ideal which could be realized only through the utmost "patience and abnegation of self and devotion to others." Chaucer's "Poure Persoun of a Toun" is hardly worthy of more praise. We doubt not that there had been, and were, in New England many a minister whose daily life was in full accord with Mather's ideal. The preparation and learning required of a minister are emphasized. He should know Greek and Hebrew in order to correctly interpret scriptural text. It is true that the author has the over-anxiety for self-salvation characteristic of the Puritan:

"Awakened be my Fears, great Saviour God,
Lest I should perish, while I others save;
And may I sedulous my Cares employ
To save myself and others gain to Bliss!"

But this is the only false note in the poem and pardonable in the light of old theology. In this year, also, 1773, there was printed, in Boston, "A Comment on Some Passages in the Book of Job,"¹ by Richard Devens. It is in heroic couplet and is practically a paraphrase of portions of the Old Testament book. The verse is indifferent. Much better is Timothy Dwight's "The Trial of Faith,"² a free paraphrase of the first three chapters of the Book of Daniel.

Dwight's religious epic, "The Conquest of Canaan," received favorable notice both in America and England. The poem was finished in 1774 while the author was a tutor in Yale College, but was not published until after the Revolutionary War, in 1785 at Hartford. It is interminably long, nearly ten thousand lines, and, to the majority of readers, interminably dull; yet Cowper, who read it, was sufficiently impressed with its merits to criticise it in the following manner: "In his fictions he discovers much warmth of conception, and his numbers are very harmonious. His numbers, indeed, imitate pretty closely those of Pope, and there-

¹ In 1795 there were some alterations made in the poem. This edition I have not seen.

² Originally printed in 1786, in the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine*. Reprinted in "American Poems, Selected and Original." Litchfield, 1793.

fore cannot fail to be musical; but he is chiefly to be commended for the animation with which he writes, and which rather increases as he proceeds, than suffers any abatement. His seventh book, in which he describes with great spirit the horrors of a battle fought by the light of a city in flames, affords one proof of it; and his tenth book, which is the last but one, another. Here an angel reveals to Joshua, in vision, the future destiny of his nation, and the poet takes his course through all the great events of prophecy, beginning with the settlement of the chosen race in Canaan, and closing with the consummation of all things. A strain of fine enthusiasm runs through the whole book; and we will venture to affirm, that no man who has a soul impressible by a bright display of the grandest subjects that revelation furnishes, will read it without emotion."¹ If the foremost poet in England could read "The Conquest of Canaan" with such gusto, it is not surprising that others enjoyed it. Opening with a picture of the distress and misery of the Israelites following the battle mentioned in the beginning of the

¹ The criticism of "The Conquest of Canaan" by Cowper was published in *The Analytical Review*. It was reprinted in Southey's edition of Cowper's "Works," Vol. IV, pp. 355-358.

seventh chapter of Joshua, the epic moves forward ponderously through war and rumors of war, and concludes with the final conquest and the entering of the Promised Land. There are many single lines and passages of poetic merit. Many of the descriptions equal, if they do not surpass, those in "Greenfield Hill." But we cannot follow Cowper far in his appreciation. The poem, on the whole, is exceedingly dull. The couplets grow monotonous. As biblical narrative it is not historically exact, for the author has, for artistic purposes, so he says, changed the position of the incidents and varied the story. Then, too, historic perspective is frequently marred by contemporary allusions. The sense of the fitness of things receives a tremendous jolt when Joseph Warren is introduced among the militant heroes of the Old Testament. It has been suggested that the popularity of "The Conquest of Canaan" would have been greater had it not been for the rapidly increasing spread of infidelity at that period. Dwight himself may have recognized this; at least he must have perceived a crying need for a champion of the old-time religion, for three years later, in 1788, he issued a ringing challenge in his well-known "The Triumph of Infidelity." A history of those forces which have

opposed Christianity in the past is followed by an ironical enumeration of the arguments of the eighteenth century atheists. This poem is shorter and less ambitious than "The Conquest of Canaan," but the purpose is more evident, and the author is dead in earnest. He is, in fact, so much in earnest that his indignation and lack of humor clog the delicate machinery of irony which he attempts to use. Even the learned Dwight was no very formidable opponent in a mental fencing match with the nimble Voltaire, to whom the poem is addressed, and to seriously attack the philosophy of David Hume was a task which might well have caused a bolder man to pause. But Timothy Dwight has no misgivings. Rushing in pell-mell, he strikes blindly about in his fury. Argument is unnecessary; assertion is proof. The author is angry that men can be such fools. Nor does he once allow for the possible sincerity of the men he attacks. Dwight's biographer, William B. Sprague, thinks that "'The Triumph of Infidelity' was fitted to render important service to the cause of Christianity, at a time when the most formidable influence was arrayed against it." This is undoubtedly true if we remember that the service rendered was not an intellectual service, but a service of personality. The lives of early

Americans were greater than any of their compositions, and their personal influence was often tremendous. The faith which contemporaries placed upon the opinions of these men often gave a mere assertion the effect of proof, and we may be assured that admirers of Timothy Dwight sincerely believed their idol to have completely vanquished the odious Voltaire and the presumptuous Hume.

In 1786, two years before "The Triumph of Infidelity" appeared, the first edition of Freneau's poems came out in Philadelphia. It contained a poem in four cantos called "The History of the Prophet Jonah." The poem was written in 1768 when the poet was in his seventeenth year, and it bears the ear-marks of youth. It is a literary exercise in the form of a biblical paraphrase. It is the only poem of Freneau's of any length which has a religious subject, and the composition gives no indication of unusual poetic power. Freneau's genius was patriotic and purely poetic, rather than religious.

A book which, because of its gentle kindliness, deserves to be mentioned with Samuel Mather's "Sacred Minister" is the poem in blank verse called "The Beauties of Religion," by Elijah Fitch,¹ published in Providence in 1789. The

¹ Born in 1745. Educated at Yale. Degree of A.M.

poem is inscribed to the Reverend Ezra Stiles, the President of Yale College. The author thus announces his purpose: "The design of these Essays is to paint Religion in her native beauties. They are principally intended for youth, to give them just views of Religion, and to persuade them to love and practice it. The subject required me to study perspicuity and precision more than elegance, and truth more than poetical embellishment." Each of the five books is preceded by a quotation from Young. According to the subject-matter the poem might properly be divided into three parts: The Philosophy of Religion, Book I; The Beauties of Religion, Books II and III, and The Practical Application of the Foregoing to the Youth of the Day, Books IV and V. The author argues that not only is religion necessary to insure the immortality of the soul, but he strikes a subtler blow at the atheism of the day, when he maintains that religion exerts beneficial effects upon society and is productive of the happiness of civil communities. The spirit of the poem is Puritanic to some extent, but not Calvinistic. The beauties of a righteous life, rather than the hell fire of the

conferred upon him by Harvard in 1770. Served as minister for seventeen years to the church in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, where he died in 1788.

sinner, occupies the mind of the poet. The blank verse swings along easily and naturally, as if Fitch were giving a heart-to-heart talk to his congregation at Hopkinton. One is impressed with the spirit of sincerity and cheerful faith which breathes through the poem. Though the mind may remain uninfluenced, the heart is inevitably touched. Taken as a whole "The Beauties of Religion" is wonderfully pure and elevated in tone. If this is not great poetry, it has at least all the poetic rapture which great faith engenders. Near the end of the poem the poet exclaims:

"O thou! fair, beautiful, charming and good!
The soul and breath of all felicity!
Beatifying all in Heaven and earth!
So delicately graceful and so kind."

In the popular mind Wigglesworth represents the sterner side of the religion of our ancestors. A century and more elapses and "The Beauties of Religion" teaches us that a gentler, more merciful, and more *beautiful* religion has taken possession of the hearts of men.

Among the many ambitious poets who have mistaken their calling was Peter St. John "of Norwalk, in Connecticut," who, at Danbury, in 1793, published a poem in four books entitled

"The Death of Abel, an Historical or Rather Conjectural Poem." "The principal part of the ideas exhibited in the following Poem," the author informs us in the preface, "I found in a book which was written originally in the German language. I acknowledge I have in some places omitted some of the author's ideas where I humbly thought the author was a little more repetitious than needful, and in some places I have made bold to introduce some ideas of my own, at which I hope my readers will take no offence, as I wrote purely to please myself." The one hundred and seventy-three pages of heroic couplet thus begin:

"Silence thou mute enchanteress adieu!
Henceforth no more employ have I for you."

It is difficult to get beyond this. The remainder of the poem is in general keeping with the tenor of the beginning,—an almost interminable lot of doggerel fully sustaining the words of the author on the title page, viz., that the poem "relates many things which might probably take place both before and after that Barbarous Fratricide."

Somewhat better is Pelatiah Chapin's "Evangelic Poetry," issued in Concord the following year, 1794. Much of it is so bound together

and unified that it almost assumes the nature of an epic. Thus "Absalom's Rebellion" is in eight parts. Of no artistic value, it is distinguished by a pious, reverent spirit. "The Gospel Tragedy," an Epic Poem in Four Books, was printed anonymously at Worcester, in 1795. "The reader will pardon the anonymous manner in which the poem comes into the world, and gratify the author's wish, to shun public notice, any farther than he is necessarily exposed by his calling. However, be the fate of the following sheets as it may, if the Christian is edified, and the Saviour honored, the end of the author is answered." "The Gospel Tragedy" is a direct imitation of "Paradise Lost." In Book I, or "The Council," Satan and his followers rebel against Christ and plan to accomplish his fall through a temptation; in Book II, or "The Temptation," Satan tempts Christ for forty days in the wilderness; Book III treats of "The Ministry" up to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and Book IV, or "The Crucifixion," depicts the scene on Golgotha, closing with the Resurrection and Ascension. Reverent in attitude, "The Gospel Tragedy" is, notwithstanding, a dull and indifferent poem. It is listless, lukewarm, and lacks the spirit of reforming zeal and the pious enthusiasm which

distinguish so many of these early religious poems. With more warmth, but with even less of poetic ability, is the poem called "Rewards and Punishments; or Satan's Kingdom Aristocratical," Philadelphia, 1795, by John Cox. In the versified preface the author declares that he is but twenty-two years of age and that this is his first excursion in verse; that he is a humble tradesman and knows no Latin or Greek. The poem is little more than a sermon in verse. The author calls upon God

"That thou may'st send a blessing on my verse,
And folly from the minds of men disperse,
Open their spiritual eyes and let them see,
All their dependence ought to be on thee."

The "Noah's Flood," by Joseph Vail,¹ New London, 1796, has a quaint simplicity and a picturesqueness of detail which go far towards making the poem readable. The first of the two books narrates in general the history of man up to the time of the Deluge, and concludes with the building of the Ark, a description of the Deluge itself, the destruction of the wicked and the escape of the righteous. In Book II the poet applies the moral to the preceding story.

¹ Joseph Vail, A.M., Pastor of the Third Church in East Haddam.

The scenes in the life of Christ are well portrayed. Throughout the piece there runs a persuasive gentleness which, however, hardens at the close into a Wigglesworthian threat against obstinate sinners, who

“shall feel the vengeance of eternal fire.”

In the same book with “Mount Vernon,”¹ Philadelphia, 1799, by John Searson, is that author’s “Paraphrase on part of the Book of Job.” It is hard to realize that the two poems are by the same author. The jerkiness and end-stopped couplets of the former poem are noticeably absent in the Paraphrase. With the inspiration of an original at hand Searson seems fairly fluent in composition, but when left entirely to his own resources, as in “Mount Vernon,” he flounders lamentably.

In 1803, at Haverhill, was printed “A Poem on the Existence of God,” by Jonathan Allen, A.M., designed, so the author states, “as an antidote against atheism and irreligion.” Like so many other poems of the eighteenth century, having for an object the defense of the Christian religion, it is rapturous rather than logical. The same criticism may be applied with equal propriety to the “Divine Poems and Essays” of

¹ See “Imaginative Verse.”

Maria De Fleury, issued in New York the year following, 1804. "Immanuel; or, The Godhead of Christ Displayed" is an attempt to defend the doctrine of the Trinity at a time "when arianism, sabelianism, and socinianism is pouring in upon us like a flood." Miss De Fleury's sixty pages of mediocre blank verse succeed in proving nothing beyond the sincerity of her own belief. The Amazonian quality of style which Mr. John Towers professes to discover in these poems is not especially evident. Mr. Towers, in his Introduction, states that these poems "have been written by a pious, godly woman, whom I really believe, fears God above many. In many of her writings her style is rather masculine than otherwise. Being frequently in the company of ministers, it is not to be wondered at if she should imperceptibly speak or write, in some respects, after their manner."

Elhanan Winchester¹ shares with Timothy

¹ Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, 1751. Died in Hartford, Connecticut, 1797. "He was a man of unquestioned honesty and honor, of uniform cheerful serenity, of unconquerable benevolence and charity." John Emory Hoar in a paper entitled "Elhanan Winchester, Preacher and Traveler" read before the Brookline Historical Society, November 27, 1901. In Brookline Historical Society Publications, No. 2.

Dwight the distinction of having written one of the two longest religious epics in American literature. "The Process and Empire of Christ, From his Birth to the End of the Mediatorial Kingdom," Brattleboro, 1805, is a poem of three hundred and forty-seven pages of blank verse, modelled upon "Paradise Lost." "I first began to plan it out and write it," says the author, "on the 26th of February, 1787, the day after I had preached a sermon from Zechariah 14:9. I found my heart so warmed with the glorious subject, the kingdom of Christ, on which I had been preaching, that I found an inclination to write upon it; and I immediately took up my pen, and wrote the plan of this poem as it now stands." The epic is in twelve books. Beginning with the birth of Christ the story proceeds through his life and death, the Ascension, the Second Coming, The Millennium, The New Creation, and the Conclusion of the Mediatorial Kingdom. By "Mediatorial Kingdom" the author has in mind the thousand years following the second coming of Christ, when Christ shall reign upon earth and when

"Every knee shall bow, and tongue shall swear;
Sin, sorrow, pain and death shall be destroyed."

And finally

“ Then Christ, as Mediator, will resign
The kingdom up; and God be all in all.”

The first half of the poem is simple biblical history; in the latter half there is much invention wherein the poet succeeds in evolving something of a religious Utopia. “ The Process and Empire of Christ ” is sincere and reverent. As a biblical narrative it is simple and vivid, and no doubt made a strong appeal to those of strong religious inclination. The extended length of the poem would not be an insuperable obstacle to minds regularly accustomed to the usual two-hour New England sermon. The author handles blank verse freely and with sufficient variety. A high poetic level is frequently attained. Considering the confessed haste and lack of finish with which the epic was composed, it is, all in all, a rather remarkable production. The more historical temper of the first half of the poem gradually vivifies in the latter half, and especially at the close, into the burning, inspired tone of the prophet and religious enthusiast.

Preceded by an excellent biographical sketch by his brother-in-law, Charles Brockden Brown, the “ Valerian ” of John Blair Linn was published the same year, 1805, in Philadelphia. “ Parts of this poem,” so the preface states, “ are an attempt to describe some of those persecutions

which Christians suffered under the tyrants of Rome, and to exhibit, in a rapid manner, the blessed effects of the light of the gospel, when carried into heathen lands." The scene is laid in the time of Nero, in Montalvia, an imaginary country lying eastward of the Caspian Sea. Valerian, the hero, is shipwrecked on the shores of Montalvia. Alcestes, a seer, who, with his daughter Azora, lives nearby, finds Valerian and nurses him back to life. In Book I Alcestes narrates to the convalescing invalid the history of the Montalvians and describes their heathen life. Valerian, in Book II, in turn relates the story of his own and of his companions' sufferings under the persecutions of Nero in Rome, and how he finally escaped. In Book III the people of Montalvia accept the Christian religion through the influence of Valerian, who at the close weds Azora. Linn, who at one time was a law student in the office of Alexander Hamilton, spent the last years of his active life as a Presbyterian clergyman in Philadelphia. He was more the artist than the preacher, however, and in "Valerian," while the subject is religious, art, rather than missionary zeal, seems uppermost in the mind of the writer. Linn was a real poet, one of the few early American poets whose works are worth reading because of in-

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The war of scripture which preceded the passage of scripture upon the minds of our forefathers was the work of Job. The Psalms were not first proposed, but the trials and sufferings of the great man, his temptations and final victory, were of peculiar power in their appeal to men who believed that life was a continuous struggle with the forces of evil. Scores of poems, mostly paraphrases, were inspired by this Old Testament story. The longest and most ambitious of these was the work of Chaucer.

¹ The name is taken from Revelation xxi. 3:

Lee, A.M., pastor of the church in Colebrook. "The Trial of Virtue," Hartford, 1806, a two-hundred-page poem in heroic couplet, is a paraphrase of the entire book of Job, and is "designed as an explanatory comment upon the divine original, interspersed with critical notes upon a variety of its passages." There is an interesting allusion in the preface to what Lee considers the pernicious influence of Goethe upon the younger generation. "Should the attention of our youth generally be diverted from the sorrows of Werter, to the Sorrows of Job, it is confidently believed that they would realize a subject of more rational entertainment, a source of more solid and useful instruction, and the example of a character more worthy of their esteem and imitation." As a religious poem "The Trial of Virtue" is worthy of praise. There are no noteworthy passages in it, and it occasionally becomes monotonous on account of its length, but the narrative element is sufficient to stimulate interest, the couplet is used with ease, and the poem springs from a deeply reverent nature. Whatever we may think of the artistic value of the sacred poems in early American literature, we cannot but respect the deep sincerity of religious conviction by which they were inspired.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL AND SATIRICAL VERSE

(a) *Political Satire*

NOT until after the middle of the eighteenth century is satirical verse to be found in American literature.¹ The colonists of the seventeenth century, as we have seen, were interested in the rapidly forming history of the New World and in those matters of conscience and religious freedom for which they had emigrated from England. The comparative lack of opposition which they received in America in the exercise of individual worship allowed the satirical temper to remain dormant. Unity of thought based upon common beliefs, purposes, and dangers, bound the colonists together in a fraternal band in which there was a minimum of friction. The colonial governments were for the most part equitable and satisfactory, and offered little ground for complaint.

¹ The one exception are the poems of Ebenezer Cook. See under "Social and Personal Satire."

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But in time the natural growth of the colonies destroyed the earlier solidarity of interest. New ideas, new outlooks, a diversity of peoples and purposes brought on the inevitable clash.

That which more than any one thing was influential in warming into life the blood of the satirists was the spread of democratic ideas at a time when monarchy was exerting unjust control. A decade before the Declaration of Independence the growing political oppression of England inspired the first satires in American literature. With the great English satirists as models of form, but with an independence of spirit and an individuality of address peculiarly their own, these men fearlessly issued the challenge which was to be carried into action by those who fought at Bunker Hill, Trenton, and Saratoga.

Dr. Benjamin Church,¹ the well-known Boston physician and poet, wrote the first important political satire in verse. "The Times" was published in 1765, just after the passage of the Stamp Act, and is a satire on the pigheadedness of British parliamentarians and on the general attitude of Great Britain towards the colonies.

¹ Should not be confused with the Benjamin Church (1639-1718) who was the leader in the war against King Philip.

The poem illustrates the attitude of mind common in many at this period, of loyalty to the King coupled with firmness in a demand for colonial privileges and rights. So long as it does not interfere with self-respect, peace is desired above all things; but if abuse and unjust measures continue to be heaped upon loyal subjects they will fight for the preservation of their liberties. They will have the courage

“To wage unequal wars—and dare the worst,
And if thy country perish, perish first.”

It is in “The Times” that Church exclaims

“Not for a monarch would I forge a lie,
To nestle in the sunshine of his eye.”

And yet this was the very thing that he was later convicted of doing. While ostensibly a patriot, Church was, in 1775, detected in aiding the Crown with secret information concerning the American forces. By Washington's order he was arrested. A special court of inquiry convicted him of treason and sentenced him to imprisonment, from which, on account of failing health, he was afterwards freed. It is thought that Church had at heart the welfare of the colonies, and sincerely believed that their best good lay in allegiance to England, but his du-

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plicity in trying in an underhand way to bring about that end has cast his memory into reproach.

Seven years later, in 1772, James Allen, of Boston, published his "Lines on the Massacre." The massacre referred to was that of the fifth of March, 1770, when Captain Preston's British soldiers, exasperated by the taunts of the crowd, fired a volley, killing three of the citizens and wounding several others. This so-called Boston Massacre created tremendous excitement, and even aroused the indolent Allen to register his emotion in the satirical piece mentioned. After rapidly passing over the earlier colonial history, the author arrives at that part of his poem where, suddenly remembering George the Third, he exclaims:

"Stay, Pharaoh, stay, that impious hand forbear,
Nor tempt the genius of our souls too far."

The Boston Massacre is discussed in a defiant tone. This poem had been designed to accompany Dr. Warren's oration on the Massacre, but at the last moment doubts were cast upon the author's patriotism, and the poem was suppressed. Through the influence of friends, however, it was finally published, along with a second poem called "The Retrospect," the latter

being inserted to prove the author's questioned loyalty. In "The Retrospect" Allen passes in review some of the famous conquests of history, especially British conquests, the entire panorama being viewed with reference to America and the present attitude of England towards the colonies. The poem proves beyond a doubt that Allen was as staunch a patriot as his chronic indolence would permit, and as bitter an enemy of the King as one of his easy temper could well be. Apart from its historical interest, "The Retrospect" is readable because of its breadth of outline and artistic coloring.

More defiant in attitude, and at the same time on a much higher poetic level, is John Trumbull's "An Elegy on The Times," New Haven, 1775, inspired by the operation of the Boston Port Bill. This act of the British Parliament was passed in a vindictive spirit and placed the town of Boston in a state of naval blockade, and by stopping all commercial intercourse by sea, was planned to ruin its trade and prosperity. At the time of writing the poem Trumbull was pursuing the study of law in Boston in the office of John Adams, afterward President of the United States. After reviewing some of the wrongs of the colonists at the hands of Great Britain, with especial reference to the Port Bill,

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the poet issues a spirited challenge, and closes with a prophecy of the future independence and greatness of America. According to the advertisement the poem "was adapted to the circumstances of the times at that period and calculated to promote that spirit of liberty, industry, and economy, recommended by the Grand Congress, then sitting at Philadelphia." The following stanza is indicative of the general tenor of the poem:

"And think'st thou, North, the sons of such a race,
Where beams of glory blest their purpled morn,
Will shrink unnerv'd before a tyrant's face,
Nor meet thy louting insolence with scorn?"

Trumbull has considerable claim to serious recognition as a poet, but, as we shall see later, he was more at home in mock-heroic and burlesque than in any other species of composition.

It was during the operation of the Port Bill that Freneau wrote his amusing "A Voyage to Boston."¹ A traveller journeys by sea to Boston, and arrives at the mouth of a river of Massachusetts where he meets the native

¹ This is the original poem later revised, in the 1786 edition of his poems, under the title of "The Midnight Consultations; or, a Trip To Boston." The revised poem ends at that point in the story where Gage falls asleep. A short but defiant Epilogue is appended.

"Genius of North America." This person presents the traveller with a "magic vest," declaring that it will render the wearer invisible. The "Genius" urges the stranger to don the vest and visit Boston, where he can thus unseen "view the dire effects of tyranny." He does as requested, and comes at midnight to the "dome of State" where Gage, Burgoyne, Percy, Howe, and other British officers are holding a council in which they are discussing the recent British defeats. General Gage is chairman of the meeting:

"a crimson chair of state
Received the honour of his Honour's weight;
This man of straw the regal purple bound,
But dullness, deepest dullness hovered round."

The council is laughingly burlesqued. Gage, with great lack of dignity, falls asleep in his "chair of state" and the council breaks up. The traveller, then continuing his invisible journey about the town, views in succession the cutting down of a Liberty Tree, the patriots imprisoned in Boston, and the dissection of a Tory. The poem concludes with a visit to the Provincial Camp, where the traveller hears the speech of an American soldier. "A Voyage to Boston" is one of the most interesting of the Revo-

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lutionary poems. It has a sprightly fancy and the pictures unroll in clear-cut outline. It is at once a satirical burlesque on the British leaders in Boston, a call to arms against oppression, and a plea for peace.

“Long may Britannia rule our *hearts* again,
Rule as she rul’d in George the Second’s reign.”

He desires that Britannia may “be glorious but ourselves be free.” One of the most amusing parts of the poem is the description of the dissection of a Tory. He is all bad. Such burlesques, by helping to break down the feeling of awe and reverence towards the power and tradition of Great Britain and her representatives, did much in spreading the spirit of revolt.

A fearless denunciation of the “dirty cause” in which George the Third was engaged in attempting to over-tax the colonies, is the poem called “American Taxation.”¹ The American leaders, Greene, Gates, Putnam, and Washington, whom the author calls “the Second Alex-

¹ Duyckinck ascribes the authorship of this poem to Samuel St. John of New Canaan, Connecticut. Stedman and Hutchinson claim that it was written by Peter St. John of Norwalk, Connecticut. A careful investigation of the early records of these towns in the excellent sources contained in the Lenox Library, New York City, failed to discover definite proof as to the authorship.

ander" are eulogized, and many events of the war are commented upon. There is a swing to this ballad like the drum-beat which stimulates the soldier to courage upon the march to battle. In it is the intense indignation and resolute spirit of resistance which nerved the colonists into action.

It must not be supposed that the Loyalist poets were entirely silent while the others were thus giving expression to their feelings. They were less in evidence because they had less inspiration. The new order of things, rather than the old, is apt to stimulate the mind, and it was the new and amazing idea of independence which set tingling the brain cells of the patriots. Moreover, the printing presses were mostly in the hands of the Whigs. Rivington of New York was the best known Tory printer.¹ One of the first important attacks on those who opposed the King was an anonymous composition called "The Patriots of North America," New York, 1775, a thirty-four-page poem in octosyllabics. While not ribald, it is nevertheless emphatic. In speaking of those who desire independence the author says:

"Behold a vain, deluded Race,"

¹ See "Loyalist Poetry of The Revolution." Edited by Winthrop Sargent. Philadelphia, 1857.

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and again :

“ Poor giddy wights, without pretence
To age, experience, parts or sense ;
Yet dare to judge of men, of things,
And think themselves as great as Kings ;
Leave them, their idle course to run,
In two short years, they'd be undone.”

More humorous and genial in tone is the “Cow-Chace,” New York, 1780, a poem in three short cantos by Major John André. It is a satire in which the marauding methods of General Wayne are ridiculed. A crowd of American “heroes drunk as poison” makes an expedition in an attempt to secure cattle and sheep for the American army. The poem is clever, and in its rapid and clear narration, and in the humor of the lines, deserves a place beside Hopkinson’s “Battle of The Kegs.” Had the popular André directed his talents to poetry he would no doubt have achieved considerable distinction. The last stanza is prophetic:

“ And now I’ve closed my epic strain,
I tremble as I show it,
Lest this same warrior-drover Wayne,
Should ever catch the poet.”

The poem was originally published in Riving-

ton's *Royal Gazette*, on the very morning of the day on which André was taken prisoner. In Rivington's *Gazette*, also, was published, in 1779, "The Word of Congress," by the Reverend Jonathan Odell, M.A., the most prominent of the Loyalist poets. Odell had taken holy orders in England, and had been appointed minister in the province of New Jersey. He espoused the cause of the Crown, and as a consequence was persecuted and driven from his family and home. Odell is supposed to have been the medium of communication between Arnold and André, and it is certain that he was influential in the Loyalist cause. "The Word of Congress" is a satire on the members of the Continental Congress. Here are the opening lines:

"The word of Congress, like a round of beef,
To hungry Satire gives a sure relief."

The attack is scurrilous, though not so much so as in his longer and better known satire, "The American Times," printed in New York in 1780 under the name of "Camillo Querno."¹ The

¹ Camillo Querno was the buffoon and poet of Leo X. See Pope's "Dunciad," 11-13. "This pseudonym was probably suggested by that writer's application of a lofty measure and learned conceits to trivial subjects." Winthrop Sargent in "Loyalist Poetry of The Revolution."

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author is frank in stating his position. "The masters of reason," he says, "have decided, that when doctrines and practices have been fairly examined, and proved to be contrary to truth and injurious to society, then and not before may ridicule be lawfully employed in the service of virtue. This is exactly the case of the Grand American Rebellion; it has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; able writers have exposed its principles, its conduct, and its final aim. Reason has done her part, and therefore this is the legitimate moment for satire. Accordingly the following piece is offered to the public. Next year the publication would be too late, for in all probability there will then be no Congress existing." "The American Times" is a coarse and vulgar attack on the leaders of the Revolution: "From profoundest hell" are summoned furies in

"unnumbered hideous shapes,
Infernal wolves, and bears, and hounds, and apes."

These are the prominent patriots, soldiers, and statesmen in America, whom he proceeds to characterize in his own peculiar way. Among those satirized are Franklin, Laurens, Adams, Hancock, Jay, Washington, Morris, and Chase. The lines on Franklin are a fair sample:

" Or what if Franklin should go down to hell,
Why should we grieve? the land, 'tis understood,
Can furnish hundreds equally as good."

The only possible note of respect which can be found in the poem is in the treatment of Washington and of Laurens, who was then President of Congress. And even of Laurens he says:

" So, Laurens, to conclude my grave harangue,
I would not pity tho' I saw thee hang."

Washington's bravery is admired, but even he is

" Patron of villainy, of villains chief."

A certain antiquarian with commendable enthusiasm has attempted to defend the personalities in which Odell delights by claiming that they are not more direct or more abundant than those of Pope. Pope, however, with all his invective, had the saving grace of wit. Odell has little or none. Without wit or sense, "The American Times" would be hard to equal as an example of vindictive mud-slinging. We must go to William Cobbett in Philadelphia to find a rival. The poem has the virtue of vigor and ease of expression, and it is interesting because

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of the wide-awake and belligerent attitude into which the reader is surprised.

In the same year, 1780, Freneau is busy writing upon the opposite side. "The British Prison Ship" depicts the horrors and inhumanities of a British prison ship and of a British hospital ship. While on the ship *Aurora* bound from Philadelphia to Santa Cruz, Freneau was captured by the British and confined for nearly a month and a half in midsummer on the prison-ship *Scorpion*. His sufferings and those of his companions are vividly described. With white-hot indignation the poet calls upon his countrymen to drive the murderers from the country. In the *Freeman's Journal* of November, 1781, was printed Freneau's poem "On the Fall of General Earl Cornwallis," a severe arraignment of Cornwallis and George the Third. Far better than either of these poems was "The Political Balance," written in 1782. This is one of the most clever of Freneau's compositions, and one of the most effective of all the satires of the period. Jove is represented as weighing, in the scales of Libra, Great Britain against Columbia. Strange to say, when Britain's dependencies and colonies are placed in the scale with the parent isle, Britain weighs less than when weighed alone. Columbia outbalances Britain, and Jove

in disgust curses the island. There is excellent invention and keen satire in the poem, without the intrusion of a single dull line.

The most popular and by far the best of the Revolutionary satires, both in plan and execution, is the "McFingal" of John Trumbull. It is a mock-heroic modelled upon "Hudibras," and is scarcely inferior to Butler's masterpiece in the sparkling quality of its wit. "McFingal" was written at the urgent request of members of the American Congress, who believed that Trumbull could aid the cause of Independence by writing a poem which should weaken the Tory cause by turning it to ridicule. The first two cantos were published in Philadelphia in 1775, when the author was but twenty-five years of age. The poem was not completed until 1782, and was published that year in its final form at Hartford. McFingal is represented as a blustering, self-assured Tory squire. He lives in a village near Boston, is a justice of the peace, and in Town Meeting makes long speeches against the Whigs. His over-emphasis of attack reacts upon and injures his own cause:

"Thus stored with intellectual riches,
 Skill'd was our Squire in making speeches;
 Where strength of brains united centers
 With strength of lungs surpassing Stentor's.

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But as some muskets so contrive it,
As oft to miss the mark they drive at,
And though well aim'd at duck or plover,
Bear wide, and kick their owners over;
So fared our Squire, whose reasoning toil
Would often on himself recoil,
And so much injured more his side,
The stronger arguments he applied."

McFingal is "the vilest Tory in the town," and he finally makes himself so obnoxious that he is tarred, feathered, and ridden around town followed by a hooting mob. All besmeared with tar he returns home, summons his Tory companions to a secret meeting in his cellar, and relates to them a "vision" which has suddenly come to him since the tarring. He announces that his prophetic sense of "second sight" has made it clear that the American cause will win, that the colonists will be free and independent, and that a great and flourishing nation will arise. He advises his fellow Tories to waste no time in joining the Whigs. Just at this moment a panic is created among those assembled in the cellar by a report that the Whigs have returned with a mob upon hearing that a Tory meeting is in secret session. The lights are extinguished and McFingal, escaping through a window, flees to Boston. Thus the poem ends.

"McFingal" was written for a special purpose at a special time, and was written for the masses. No doubt the Yale tutor would have preferred a more elevated style, but it was necessary to appeal to the people in a familiar, and even in a coarse, manner. What Trumbull considered the higher art was sacrificed for love of country. The author had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and he embodied it in crisp, snappy couplets. He was thoroughly familiar with the public men and events of the day, and there were very few Tories of prominence who escaped the trenchant quality of his wit. "McFingal" went through more than thirty editions, and the influence of the poem in aiding and encouraging the spirit of independence can hardly be overestimated.

At last the war came to a close. Cornwallis surrendered on the nineteenth of October, 1781. On the third of September, 1783, the representatives of England, France, Holland, Spain, and the United States met in Paris and signed a permanent treaty of peace. America had won her independence and had won in the face of enormous odds. No single individual or class of individuals deserved the credit for what had taken place. It was the result of concerted action on the part of the many. Soldier, statesman,

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/ and poet shared equally in the responsibility and in the glory of the achievement. It was the part of the poet to keep continually before the mind of the people the ideal of freedom, to instill courage into the hearts of the patriots, and to weaken the British cause by pouring ridicule upon it. The poets did their part well and effectively, and no history of the American Revolution can be complete which does not recognize the value of their services to the cause of Independence.

The Treaty of Paris was no sooner signed than new problems presented themselves, problems in government which tested the skill and ingenuity of the best statesmanship in the new nation. The war debt had reached the sum of thirty-eight million dollars. The states were asked to levy a tax to meet the indebtedness, but some were slow in collecting the tax, while others boldly refused to contribute at all. Because of the government's inability to pay the soldiers, the disbanding of the army was attended with riotous scenes. For three years after the treaty of peace public affairs in America were in a state bordering on chaos. In this crisis again the satirists took up their pens, and again they did effective service. In the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* of October 26, 1786,

appeared the first number of "The Anarchiad," a series of mock-critical poems written jointly by David Humphreys, John Trumbull, Joel Barlow, and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, members of the junto of so-called "Hartford Wits." The satires were published anonymously in the *Gazette* during the years 1786 and 1787, and it is therefore very difficult to correctly fix the authorship of any given portion. A short time before, the interest of the public had been awakened in the report of a discovery in the west of some very old fortifications. "The Anarchiad" was claimed to be an ancient heroic poem in the English language which had accidentally been discovered in these ruins, and which had with difficulty been deciphered by the use of a chemic solution made use of in restoring oil paintings. The title was found to be "The Anarchiad, a Poem on the Restoration of Chaos and Substantial Night." The composition was supposed to have antedated Homer, and to have influenced that poet, besides Virgil and Milton. In the form of a vision or prophecy the Anarchiad claims to foretell the political and social state of New England immediately following the Revolutionary War, and before the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The leader of the forces of confusion is "Anarch," in character and posi-

tion similar to the "Lucifer" of Milton. The authors wished to combat the forces of anarchy and dissension which were threatening the life of the young Republic, and to uphold the federal power. The things satirized are those things which

"Stab Independence! dance o'er Freedom's grave!"

The irony of the poem is excellent. Anarch and his followers claim that the country needs exactly those things which the authors felt that the nation was better off without. The idea was probably borrowed from "McFingal." Among the more prominent things which are satirized in "The Anarchiad" are Shay's Rebellion and paper money. The latter "in an unfunded and depreciating condition is happily calculated to introduce the long-expected scenes of misrule, dishonesty, and perdition." The Honorable William Williams, judge and legislator from Connecticut, is burlesqued as a political turncoat, under the name of "William Wimble." The plan of "The Anarchiad" is clever and it is cleverly sustained. There is sufficient variation and surprise to save it from monotony. Moreover, it has wit and sense. The poem was very popular, was copied extensively in newspapers and magazines, and was of great service in a

time of confusion and dissatisfaction in recalling the people to a realization of their responsibilities and duties.

The three years' contest which was waged over the adoption of the Constitution divided men into the first two great parties,—Federalists, and Anti-Federalists or Democrats. The leaders of the Federalists were Washington, Hamilton, Jay, and Madison. The most prominent members of the Democratic party were Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. In the centralizing of government according to the plans of the Federalists, the Democrats thought they perceived a movement towards aristocracy and kingship. There were a number of satires directed against the party of Hamilton and Madison. "The Dangerous Vice," *Columbia*, 1789, by Edward Church,¹ is an attack against "the lawless lust of Power" which the author claims is typified in the career of the Vice-President John Adams, and in the Federalists as a whole. Church issues a warning against the danger of developing an aristocracy of birth and wealth in America. He satirizes the wealthy and idle "fops" who live off the earnings of others. "If we must

¹ Edward Church was a brother of Dr. Benjamin Church of Boston. He was afterwards Consul for the United States at Lisbon,

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have a king," he says, "let us have one of the real type, arrogant and vicious, and let us not frame the idol we adore," alluding to Washington. Church felt offended at John Adams for not having granted him a government position, and while "The Dangerous Vice" is caustic and full of vigor, there is almost too much of personal animosity in it to warrant its classification as patriotic satire.

In Philadelphia, in 1795, there were published anonymously, in separate editions, two books of a so-called epic poem entitled "Aristocracy." Like "The Dangerous Vice," the poem is a satire on the Federalists, who are characterized as "a dangerous coalition to destroy the general influence of the people, or, at least, so to modify it, as may be most advantageous to the personal aggrandisement of the coalition." The editor, who is very likely "Aristus," or the real author of the work, claimed that the poem had accidentally fallen into his hands and that its "publication at this time appeared to promise some advantage to the general cause of Liberty. It may awaken some attention to our present condition, and teach my fellow-citizens to look warily about them, and see whether like designs are not now forming, and whether they ought not to be on their guard." The "Aristocracy,"

the editor further states, was the secret confession in verse of a member of the "coalition," of one

"who scorned to feel
Fraternal interest in the common weal."

This person had failed to obtain the unjust power he sought, and had "submitted in silence to the demolition of his hopes; and solaced himself by composing this poem at his country-seat, whither he had retired, and where he died a few years since, . . . with the reputation of a great Patriot!" The general plan of the poem may have been suggested by "The Anarchiad." As a satire it is novel and effective. The passages of pastoral description are worthy of mention, and the machinery of hell, after Milton, is well manipulated.

In "The Demos in Council; or, Bijah in Pandemonium," Boston, 1799, John Adams is again satirized. As "Bijah" he is made ridiculous. The poem closely follows Milton in wording, and is fair burlesque. The author is unknown.

The "Hamiltoniad," Boston, 1804, of John Williams, is the longest and most caustic of the poems directed against the Federal party. The dedication is characteristic of the temper of the piece: "To perpetuate the brute infamy of John

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Park, M.D., a Galenical excrescence, the pensioned scavenger and servile dog of the Royal Faction of New England, . . . who is the vile and crawling minion of the Essex Junto, that has been labouring to destroy the federal fabric of our Republican Constitution, and introduce a monarchical despotism upon its ruins, . . . to hold up this miscreant to endless contempt, who would obliterate the traces of charity and politeness from mankind, this work is published by The Author." In a note, many of which are given at the bottom of the pages, the author remarks: "In extinguishing these rival block-heads it is very far from our inclination to tread with rudeness over the ashes of General Hamilton, but the floods of adulation respecting his merits have been so extravagant and so puerile, that the letter of truth has been nearly obliterated in the deluge." Williams believed Hamilton to have been an exceptional man, but one whose political principles were unfortunately wrong. He was the mind and spirit of his party, and was "the founder of the Royal Faction of this country."

"When Hamilton's great spirit upward flew,
Hope shut her gates upon the Federal crew!
The Essex Junto felt the mortal blow,
And lay dismantled, in a storm of woe."

Many of the notes are historically valuable, especially those bearing upon Hamilton's policies and those upon the Hamilton-Burr controversy.

The Democrats were attacked, in their turn, by the poets whose sympathies were with the Federal Party. One of the first satires on the Jeffersonian policies was called: "Democracy; an Epic Poem," New York, 1790, and was written by Brockholst Livingston, at one time Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. The author styles himself "Aquiline Nimble-Chops, Democrat." Several cantos were projected, but only the first was published. An imaginary meeting of the Democrats is wittily burlesqued,—their parliamentary difficulties, speeches, etc.

Dr. Lemuel Hopkins was the author of two satires on the Democrats; "The Democratiad," Philadelphia, 1795, and "The Guillotina, or a Democratic Dirge," Philadelphia, 1796. The former, so the editor explains, is in retaliation for the "Philadelphia Jockey Club," a pamphlet in which the gentlemen and merchants of Philadelphia had been satirized. It is addressed to B. F. Bache, editor of *The Aurora*, a descendant of Benjamin Franklin, whom the author asserts has "a knack at lies." Not only are the Democrats made light of, but some of the Federal

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leaders are attacked, though in a personal rather than in a political way. Even more personal is "The Guillotina," in which Hamilton is likened to the "Sun's resplendent sphere," and those who are endeavoring to overturn the Constitution as "a host of unhang'd Democrats." The tendency to speculation on the part of Americans is decried in vigorous terms. The satire closes with a picture of the happiness of America as contrasted with the misery of blood-drenched Europe.

The best poetic account of the Napoleonic wars is found in "The Political Green-House," Hartford, 1799, written by Richard Alsop, with probable contributions by Dwight and Hopkins. There is a picturesque force in the description of the ruin and desolation caused by the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon. "The Political Green-House" is a rhyming review of the year 1798, and aims to comment upon the most important events of that year. For the most part it is a political satire, an attack upon the "Jacobins" and upon Jefferson and his party. Vermont is praised for having cleared out the Jacobins from the state offices. The Alien and Sedition Law is favorably commented upon. Among the more personal allusions is an appreciation of Benjamin Rush, and an attack

upon Joel Barlow, the author of "The Columbiad." Barlow, so the author says, in writing his "Conspiracy of Kings," plagiarized from the tenth number of the "Anarchiad," a part of which Barlow had himself written. "It is a prominent trait of the Jacobinical character," the author remarks, "to take what belongs to others, without leave and without paying for it." Also also pokes fun at Barlow's revision of Watts's hymns.

Although "The Political Green-House" is one of the best of the contemporary satires, it is greatly excelled both in scope and effectiveness by the "Democracy Unveiled; or, Tyranny Stripped of the Garb of Patriotism," Boston, 1805, of Thomas Green Fessenden.¹ In the preface is set forth the purpose of the poem: "My motive," says Fessenden, "arises from a deep conviction that our civil and political rights, —all that can stamp a value on society, are menaced by bad men now dominant, and bad principles, inculcated by the demagogues and philosophists of the day. . . . In our government time was not allowed for the consolidation

¹ Lawyer, journalist, and poet. Born in Walpole, New Hampshire, 1771. Died in Boston, 1837. See article on Fessenden by Nathaniel Hawthorne in the *American Monthly Magazine*, January, 1838.

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of its parts, nor was the value of the 'machine' fairly tested by being put completely in motion, before our Gallatins began to clog its wheels and our Randolphs and Nicholsons now threaten to pull it to pieces, and to throw us into a state of society bordering on that of the savage. An exposition of their arts is absolutely incumbent on every man who possesses the means of information and who holds the pen of a writer." Six cantos are required by the author in his own exposition of democratic machination.

"Devoid of influence or fear
I trace Democracy's career,
And paint the vices of the times,
While bad men tremble at my rhymes,
And I'll unmask the Democrat."

Canto First, or "The Tocsin," is a call to arms against the demagogues of the new Republic. In Canto Second, or "Illuminism," the statement is made that a Jacobin, an "Illuminee" and a Democrat are one and the same thing, inasmuch as "they each object to the propriety of law and order in society." Bonaparte was the man who punctured "Illuminism." Canto Third, or "Mobocracy," explains how mob law came into America from France, and how it is illustrated in such disturbances as those of Shay's

Rebellion in Massachusetts and the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania. In "The Jeffersoniad," or Canto Fourth, the leader of the Democratic Party is burlesqued. Canto Fifth, or "The Gibbet of Satire," is an attack on certain minor Democrats. The last of the six cantos, called "Monition," contains the author's advice to his countrymen. Fessenden asserts that too many incompetent persons are seeking public office, and advises them to stick to their trades. Let the people feel sufficient responsibility to seek out and hiss out every demagogue who is obstructing the unification of the new Republic. Fessenden deserves note as a satirist of unusual force. With a mind keen and incisive, and with the ability to unerringly pick the weak spot in the armor of his opponent, his satires always had a telling effect. He was fearless, witty, and intelligent. A graduate of Dartmouth, and trained in the law and in the politics of the time, he was ever ready with sufficient data and eloquence to confound an opponent. The movement of his verse is rapid and "nervous," a quality at which the eighteenth century poets were constantly aiming. "Nervous, thundering diction," as Cockings expressed it, was the popular conception of a good poetic style.

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The interest in things political during the closing years of the eighteenth century was especially intense. The Revolutionary War had left things in a turmoil, and the first few years saw a constant struggle of the new Republic for its own existence. The minds of men were turned irresistibly to politics, for they saw that their own personal welfare rested almost entirely upon the correct solution of the grave political problems which had presented themselves. It was rare to find neutrality of opinion in those days. Almost every one took one side or the other, and partisan spirit ran high. The poets were no exception to the rule. Two poems, however, should be mentioned as having taken the point of view of an observer, rather than that of a participant. "The Albaniad, an Epic Poem. In Three Cantos," 1791, by an unknown author who wrote under the name of "Pilgarlic," is a political burlesque after the manner of "The Rape of the Lock" in which both Federalists and Anti-Federalists are ridiculed. The second of the two poems is "The Political Contest," by William Munford.¹ The latter poem is in the

¹ A poet of Virginia, 1775-1825. For fourteen years Munford was Clerk of the House of Delegates in Virginia. "The Political Contest" is found in the "Poems and Compositions in Prose," Richmond, 1798.

form of a dialogue in which three people, "A," "B," and "C," meet and enter into a political discussion. One is a staunch adherent of one party, one is enthusiastic over the principles of another party, and the third person has no preference whatever. The argument waxes hot and ends in the two advocates turning in and giving the lukewarm member of the trio a good drubbing for his lack of opinion.

"Thus moderation in these times,
You see, is deemed the worst of crimes."

"The Political Contest" is full of genuine humor. It does not drag for a moment and in its interest and general readable quality is hardly inferior to "McFingal." The political opinions of the day are well stated, and the attitude of America towards France and England is clearly presented, and is of especial interest because of the Napoleonic wars in Europe.

That opinions of Americans differed widely as to the value of the French Revolution, is evidenced by two well-known satiric poems, "The Conspiracy of Kings," London, 1792, of Joel Barlow, and "The Echo," begun in 1791, a series of poems written, for the most part, by Richard Alsop and Timothy Dwight. Barlow is enthusiastic over the French Revolution,—he

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had, in fact, allied himself with the "Girondists" while in Europe,—and he bitterly assails Emperor Leopold, Gustavus King of Sweden, and the other European powers, who were "confederating against the liberty of France." The composition is unusually vituperative. Edmund Burke is a "degenerate slave." The author elaborates upon

"all the hell that springs

From those prolific monsters, Courts and Kings."

Very different is the tone of "The Echo," first published complete, with designs by Tisdale, in 1807. The poem owed its origin to a desire on the part of the authors to ridicule the literary affectation of newspaper writers. Some more than usually bombastic passage would be quoted, to be followed by its "Echo," or paraphrase in verse. There are many local allusions in the poem, but the most important things ridiculed, besides the literary excesses mentioned, are the Jeffersonian Democracy and the French Revolution. In the preface to the 1807 edition of "The Echo" the authors offer an interesting word of explanation in regard to their attitude towards the events in France. "But the ridicule of a vitiated mode of writing was not long the sole object of 'The Echo.' Disgusted with the

cruelties exhibited by the French Revolution, at a very early stage of its progress, and viewing it as a consuming fire, which, in the course of its conflagration, threatened to destroy whatever was most valuable in society, the authors wished to contribute their efforts in stemming the torrent of jacobinism in America, and resolved to render 'The Echo' subservient to that purpose. They therefore proceeded to attack, as proper objects of satire, those tenets, as absurd in politics as pernicious in morals, the visionary scheme of equality, and the baleful doctrine that sanctions the pursuit of a good end by the most flagitious means." "The Echo" was sometimes severe, but as a whole the poem is noteworthy for its absence of bitter invective and vulgar abuse. The excellence of the humor, together with the novelty of the plan and the established reputation of the authors, assured for the undertaking a wide publicity and popularity. The "Hartford Wits" were a remarkable group of brilliant men. All were cultured, energetic, public-spirited, and intensely patriotic. Their literary aims and ideals were sometimes in advance of their powers of execution, but when, as in "The Echo," they adopted a plan commensurate with their ability, the result was usually auspicious to the cause of American letters. An

unbounded faith in the future of the Republic was a marked characteristic of the "Hartford Wits." These men were alive to the dangers which were threatening the new nation, and their best efforts were directed toward preserving the integrity of the commonwealth; in the darkest hours of political turmoil their belief in the eventual greatness of the American Republic remained unshaken.

More easily discouraged was William Clifton,¹ the young Quaker poet. His poem called "The Group," first published in 1796, protests dejectedly against the apathy of the people towards those conditions which menace the existence of the new government. The melancholy prediction is made that the nation cannot survive the dangers which encompass it, and that it is rushing to an inevitable and to a complete destruction. Those men are bitterly satirized who, during the war of the Revolution when the outcome of the struggle was in doubt, wavered or skulked, but who now claim to have been staunch patriots and who demand the reward of

¹ Born in Philadelphia in 1772. On account of a feeble constitution, which incapacitated him for active employment, the greater part of his short life was devoted to the cultivation of letters. By far the major portion of his work was of a satirical nature. He died of consumption in 1799, at the age of twenty-seven.

civil office. "The Rhapsody on The Times," also by Clifton, is a better satire than "The Group," due partly to the more rapid movement of the octosyllabics. It is mainly a criticism of the immigration laws and on the policy of the country in inviting emigration from Europe. Clifton was keen enough to perceive the dangers which threatened the future unity of the Republic from an indiscriminate in-pouring of foreigners.

In perusing the preface of Fessenden's "Original Poems," London, 1804, we are at first inclined to classify its author as a post-bellum Royalist, for the tone which he employs in speaking of the political troubles in America is, in the earlier portion of the poem, almost as condemnatory and discouraging as the tone of "The Group." But the courage and spirit which we have already noted in the "Democracy Unveiled" present themselves at the close, where Fessenden avows his belief that the situation, although menacing, is not hopeless, and that the dangers which beset the young Republic finally will be avoided or overcome. In Fessenden's poems there are many allusions, often humorous, to rustic life in New England. His own explanation of this feature of his compositions is of sufficient interest to warrant a quotation. It

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is found in the preface to the "Original Poems." "My allusions and metaphors are mostly taken from objects which I saw in America around me. My nymphs and swains are not of Arcadian breed. My Jonathans and my Tabithas are more like the Cloddipoles and Blouzelindas of Gay than the Damons and Daphnes of Pope; and I will not assert, that I have not, in some instances, caricatured the manners of the New England rustics. Still, however, the peasantry of New England, as described in my poems, will be found to bear some semblance to what they are in real life; and I hope that the novelty of my descriptions will give them interest with the English reader." The two principal satirical pieces in the "Original Poems" are "Simon Spunkey's¹ Political Pepper-Pot" and "Political Squibs," both in octosyllabics. The former is a satiric survey in rapid and witty verse of the events in France, England, and America for the year 1797, "a period than which there is none, perhaps, in the annals of history more interesting." The poem is

"A kind of Hudibrastick summary
Of politicks and other flummery."

¹ The signature which Fessenden used in most of his political verses.

The "Political Squibs" satirizes some of the politicians of the day. There are necessarily many local and personal allusions, and these, says Fessenden, should be interesting to the English reader "as they give a sort of a prospectus of the evils to which every government is liable where an universal suffrage in the choice of rulers is allowed."

The evils of universal suffrage in the early years of the Republic were not greater than was to be expected where there was complete political reorganization. There were indeed many serious problems upon the solution of which hung the success or failure of the new government, but they were courageously attacked by men of energy and sagacity, who were determined to make good the cost of independence. Through trial and struggle the nation worked out its destiny. How far the satirists aided in this achievement it would be difficult to decide. But it is undeniable that their services were of great value in sounding the call to arms and in stimulating the intellectual battle of party leaders.

(b) *Social and Personal Satire*

The earliest social satire of which we have record in American verse is "The Sot-Weed

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Factor; or, a Voyage to Maryland," by Ebenezer Cook. From the fact that in the printed elegy on Honorable Nicholas Lowe, Cook was called "Laureat," it is inferred that he was probably an official laureate to Lord Baltimore. "The Sot-Weed" means tobacco, the weed which makes men besotted, while a "factor" was an agent of an English merchant. The poem claims to be the experiences of the author in Maryland whither he had come from England to "open store." Disgusted with the Province he returned to England and in 1708 published this poem, in which he severely criticises, in burlesque verse, the provincial government and the manners and customs of the people. The inhabitants of Maryland, says Cook, are descendants of Cain, who escaped hither after the murder of his brother. The province is the place where "conversation's lost and manners drowned."

"May Wrath Divine then lay those regions waste
Where no man's faithful nor a woman chaste."

The "Sot-Weed Factor" is, as Moses Coit Tyler remarks, something of an "obvious extravaganza,"¹ but that it was based upon some unpleas-

¹ "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Time," Vol. II, p. 255.

ant experiences in Maryland seems equally true. Twenty-two years later, at Annapolis, was published the "Sot-weed Redivivus; or, the Planters Looking-Glass, by E. C. Gent." "May I be canoniz'd for a Saint," says the author, "if I know what apology to make for this dull piece of household stuff, any more than he that first invented the Horn-Book; all that can be said in its defense is, the Muses have taken as much pains in framing their brittle ware, as Bruin does in licking her cubs into shape." This poem is either by the author of "The Sot-Weed Factor" or it is the work of a very clever imitator. It is less vivacious than the former poem, but this is not surprising in a product of a later and more sober muse. Politics, too, which predominate in this poem over the interest in social manners emphasized in the preceding work, would naturally occupy more of the attention of the mature man. Some of the lines from the former work are repeated entire in the second poem,—a strong argument for an identity of authorship. If Ebenezer Cook also wrote the second poem he has, in the intervening years, become more reconciled to the Province of Maryland. The "Sot-weed Redivivus" does not partake of the keen and uncompromising satire of the earlier poem. Faults enough, to be

sure, are found with the Province, but that the author has now a serious interest in, and a desire for, its social and political welfare, is seen in the fact that for each defect there is suggested a remedy. For the light which is thrown on the social manners and customs of early colonial life in the South, the "Sot-Weed Factor" and the "Sot-weed Redivivus" deserve careful examination.

Two years before the publication of the latter poem James Ralph, an intimate personal friend of Benjamin Franklin, was writing his "Sawney, an Heroic Poem. Occasioned by the 'Dunciad.'" Ralph was one of Franklin's literary associates in Philadelphia and accompanied him to England, where he gained some recognition as a writer of satirical verse. Pope, it will be remembered, satirized Ralph in a later edition of the "Dunciad." In the preface to "Sawney," Ralph speaks of the "Dunciad" as a "strange, wild, linsey-woolsey composition." "The whole piece is so notoriously full of pride, insolence, beastliness, malice, prophaneness, conceits, absurdities, and extravagance, that 'tis almost impossible to form a regular notion of it." As satire the poem is not so able as the preface. Pope is ridiculed in the character of Sawney:

"Sawney, a mimick Sage of huge Renown,
To Twickenham Bowers retired, enjoys his Wealth,
His Malice and His Muse."

Ralph was something of a poet, though by no means so great as his own estimate of himself. Franklin endeavored to persuade him to forsake poetry for more practical affairs, but without success. Ralph's huge self-confidence in his own position as a poet is the most noticeable thing in his literary career.

"The Manners of The Times," a satire in two parts by "Philadelphiensis," whose identity is unknown, was printed at Philadelphia in 1762. The author exclaims, with Juvenal, that "it is difficult not to write satire; for who is so patient with the iniquitous city, who so strong that he may contain himself?" Part I censures the follies of the male sex; Part II of the female sex, closing with an apostrophe to the ideal woman "whom all the world approve." When, in speaking of vice, the author exclaims

"For mine's the talk to strike the Monster dead,"

we very naturally look forward to something spirited. But the satire is indifferent; there is little point to it, no local allusions. It is more

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of a literary exercise after the manner of such closet satires as the "Steel Glass" of Gascoigne. A somewhat better composition is "The Philadelphiad," an anonymous poem which, from the general style and subject-matter, is apparently from the same hand as "The Manners of The Times." An "Assembly of Celestials" meet, in which the Gods agree to go to earth and, with Apollo as umpire, to judge who is the most beautiful. Many assemble to claim the prize.

"The girls of Philadelphia all were there."

After each contestant has presented her claim, Apollo awards the prize to a certain "Miss A——, a first-rate terrestrial Goddess." The judgment of Apollo is followed by "The Catastrophe; or, Bustle among the Batchelors," in which the bucks of the town in vain try to find the person of Apollo's choice. The poem is enveloped in an atmosphere of mild sarcasm. "The Times," by Peter Markoe, also printed in Philadelphia, is both "sarcastic" and "moral," if we are to believe the words of the author:

"The muse sarcastic poured these moral strains."

The personal flings—and there are many of them—are directed, for the most part, against local celebrities of Philadelphia. The poem is of little historic value, although there is some reference to the national politics of the time. The satire is clever, and at times keen and cutting.

One of the earliest works of John Trumbull, the author of "McFingal," is his social satire called "The Progress of Dulness." The poem is in three parts, the first part being published in 1772, and the second and third parts in the year following. The three divisions of the satire recount the experiences respectively of Tom Brainless, Dick Hairbrain, and Miss Harriet Simper. The first is a sarcastic allusion to the insufficient preparation and ignorance of ministers of the gospel, which redounds to the discredit of religion; in the second part the author tries to show some defects in the educational system of the day, and in part third he attacks the "foibles of the fair sex." The three parts are unified by the fact that Miss Simper loves and loses Dick Hairbrain, and finally marries the preacher, Tom Brainless. In the second part of the poem Trumbull had assumed a somewhat more dignified and didactic tone than in the first part. This he later con-

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sidered a mistake, for in the preface to part third he remarks: "Had I only consulted my own taste, I would have preferred sense and spirit with a style more elevated and poetical, to a perpetual drollery, and the affectation of wit; but I have found by experience in the second part of this work that it is not so agreeable to the bulk of my readers." In the last part the author therefore returns to the lighter and more amusing vein of part first.

"The Progress of Dulness" has much of the sparkle, the fancy, and the wit which distinguish "McFingal." It was less popular than the latter poem because at that time the minds of men were more occupied with political than with social problems, and the tarring of a Tory Squire appealed to the general public with tremendously greater force than the troubles of a clerical aspirant or the adventures of a college student. Yet it is safe to say that these eighty pages of Hudibrastic verse are much superior to the average satire of the eighteenth century, either American or British. Trumbull was one of the first to enlist in the campaign against the then almost exclusive study of the classics. "The mere knowledge of ancient languages," he says, "of the abstruser parts of mathematics, and the dark researches of metaphysics, is of

little advantage in any business or profession of life."

"Can knowledge never reach the brains
Unless conveyed in ancient strains?"

His attack on the clerical profession must have been based upon good grounds, if we are to believe the numerous contemporary references to the deficient learning and to the ignorance of many of the ministers of that day. Times had changed since the day of the Mathers, Oakes, and Shepherd. In the preface to "The Clerical Candidates,"¹ a later satire, 1801, the author says that neither Christian religion, nor Christian ministers in the United States meet with that respect accorded them in other parts of the world. This fact "may, in no small degree, be imputed to the state and qualifications of those who are introduced to society as ministers of religion and doctors of theology." "The Clerical Candidates" are nine ill-prepared and upstart clergymen of various religious creeds who present, in turn, to the Senate of the United States, their individual qualifications for the office of Chaplain

¹ Author not positively known. "Richard Dinmore, editor of the *National Magazine* and author of a volume of 'Select and Fugitive Poetry,' published in 1802, may have been the author." A. P. C. Griffin, in "Issues of the District of Columbia Press in 1800-01-02."

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of Congress. The satire itself is not of especial merit, but it is important to note that there was ground for the poet's effort.

Freneau's satires on Hugh Gainé and James Rivington were much relished in their day. "Hugh Gainé's Life" and "Rivington's Confessions" were both published in 1783, the year of the Treaty of Peace. Gainé, a New York printer, was well known and notorious for his vacillating character. He sided first with the patriots, then with the British, and again with the Americans. Freneau wittily satirizes him as a turn-coat. James Rivington was the Royal Printer of New York during the Revolution, and the editor of the *Royal Gazette*. After the war he changed the name of his paper to *Rivington's New York Gazette*. He, too, is ridiculed as a turn-coat. Freneau, with Hopkinson and others, found Rivington an especially good target for their shafts, and many (and deservedly, if report be true) were the writings directed against him.¹

Another well-known printer and editor, Mathew Carey of Philadelphia, was himself

¹ Shorter compositions by Freneau directed against Rivington are the poems called "Rivington's Reflections" and "Rivington's Last Will and Testament." The latter poem is especially pointed and clever.

the author of two personal satires of note. "The Plagi-Scurriliad,"¹ directed against Colonel Eleazer Oswald, proprietor of *The Independent Gazetteer*, a Democratic paper, was printed in 1786 in Philadelphia. Previous to this the differences between the two men had resulted in a duel in which Carey had been wounded. "I have exhibited Colonel Oswald," says Carey, "such as his conduct to me has fully proved him. Our dispute originated from some illiberal remarks written in his paper against newcomers. As a newcomer I thought myself called upon to answer them." According to Carey the attacks of Oswald "had every characteristic mark of the ravings of a lunatic and the abuse of a Billingsgate fishwoman." The author is clever and well able to defend himself. The dedicatory epistle in prose to Colonel Oswald is exceptionally well done and as satire excels the verse.

Much better and much more extended in scope is Carey's "The Porcupiniad," published in 1799, thirteen years later. In the meantime he had written no verse. "The Porcupiniad" is a poem of forty-seven pages in Hudibrastic

¹ The title is formed from the words "plagiarism" and "scurrility," in both of which things Oswald is reputed to have indulged.

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verse addressed to the editor of *Porcupine's Gazette*, William Cobbett,¹ probably the greatest blackguard and most vulgarly abusive writer that ever disgraced American journalism. Cobbett was a loyalist of the deepest dye and was in the habit of stating the fact in such emphatic language as "Thank heaven I am no citizen of America,"² and again, "I would not exchange my title of subject of King George for all the citizenships in the universe."³ He might have been forgiven for this. But his vicious delight in singling out prominent and worthy persons as the objects of personal spite, and heaping upon them the vilest and most uncalled-for abuse, has made his name a byword in the literary and political history of Philadelphia. It was to be expected that such a man would attack a rival printer and editor with even more viciousness, if possible, than usual. Carey had been several times wantonly and unjustly assailed by Cobbett, though the former had done all that was possible to quiet the man and avoid a dispute. Maddened by the coarse slander

¹ Editor of *Porcupine's Gazette and United States Daily Advertiser* from March 4, 1797, to January 13, 1800. Editor of the *Political Censor* from March, 1796, to March, 1797.

² *Porcupine's Gazette*, June 6, 1798.

³ *Idem*, November 28, 1798.

which Cobbett continued to heap upon him through the columns of his *Gazette*, Carey at length wrote "The Porcupiniad," a satire in which he aimed to employ Cobbett's own methods. The idea proved popular and the satire was most effective. Cobbett brought suit against Carey, but the jury refused to consider the latter guilty of any extravagance in statement.

Another satire aimed at Cobbett, and called "A Congratulatory Epistle To The Redoubtable Peter Porcupine," Philadelphia, 1796, was written by a certain "Peter Grievous, Jun.," sometimes wrongly ascribed to Francis Hopkinson.¹ Unlike "The Porcupiniad," this satire affects, in a mood of fine irony, to offer praise at the shrine of Cobbett. The editor of *Porcupine's Gazette* is the great hero who attacked the enemies of King George and

"Laid them sprawling on the grass
With but the jaw-bone of an ass."

In the "Vision," appended to the "Epistle," the author discards the mask of praise and openly attacks Cobbett. The "Vision" is in the form

¹ Napoleon's Passage of the Alps in the spring of 1800 is mentioned in the "Congratulatory Epistle." Hopkinson's death occurred in 1791.

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of a dialogue between Marat and Peter Porcupine in Hades. Cobbett was finally compelled to leave America. A slander suit brought against him by Dr. Benjamin Rush, and resulting in a verdict of eight thousand dollars for the plaintiff, convinced him that the mother country was the best place for loyalists of his own stamp, and he forthwith withdrew to England. Philadelphia breathed easier after his departure.

A third Philadelphia editor,¹ the clever and celebrated Hugh Henry Brackenridge, was the author of "Modern Chivalry," one of the three or four best satires of eighteenth century America.² The work is in prose, though it had been begun in verse, and the plan afterwards changed. Some of these earlier verses were inserted as an appendix in the final edition of the satire for the purpose of "diversifying the entertainment." The "Cincinnatus" is a mock-heroic poem of twenty-three pages, after Hudibras, which aims to ridicule the members of the Cincinnati Society, while "The Modern Chevalier" is a satire on the modern fop, or gallant,

¹ Editor of the *United States Magazine*.

² Written in the eighteenth century, though not published as a whole until 1815. Part First published in 1796. Part Second in 1806.

something after the manner of the adventures of Dick Hairbrain in "The Progress of Dulness." "The Poetical Dialogue between Lionel Lovelorn, Esq., and Geoffrey Ginger, Esq.," is clever and laughable, and by far the best of the three. "Lionel, attempting to chaunt a love-song Geoffrey respondeth every stanza, and taketh him off, much after the manner of a Merry Andrew, at Bartholomew Fair." It is intended as a burlesque on conventional versifiers who pretend to be poets, and suggests in its purpose the attack on fustian journalism in "The Echo." "The object of the following Dialogue," says the author, "is to 'brand with scorn' all petty dealers in draggled-tailed distichs and hitching hyperboles, who jingle about 'sighing swains' and 'lovelorn lasses.' . . . I have aimed the shafts of satire, with little discrimination, at the whole tribe of moon-struck Sonneteers, who palm upon the public their 'thrilling extasies' and 'liquid perils' for genuine chattels of Parnassus."

More serious than the compositions of Brackenridge, and more vital in that they struck at the root of civil revolution, were the satires directed against slavery in America. They are the opening volleys which were to increase in number and vehemence until they became

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merged in that rumble and roar of opposition to the slave traffic which immediately preceded the War of the Rebellion. "A Poetic Epistle To The Enslaved Africans" was published in Philadelphia in 1790. The poem is "in the character of an ancient negro, born a slave in Pennsylvania, but liberated some years since and instructed in useful learning and the great truths of Christianity." An historical introduction and interesting and valuable biographical notices of some of the earliest advocates in the cause of the slaves are given by the author, whose identity is unknown. Anonymous, too, is the poem in two cantos entitled "The American in Algiers, or the Patriot of Seventy-Six in Captivity,"¹ printed in New York in 1797. Canto First relates the experiences of the author when he was captured by Algerians and made a slave. Canto Second follows with a spirited attack upon the American slave trade.

A poem of nearly three hundred pages of heroic couplet is the "Avenia" of Thomas Branagan,² published in Philadelphia in 1805.

¹ On the title page are the well-known lines of Freneau:

"When God from chaos gave this world to be,
Man then he formed, and formed him to be free."

² Branagan was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1774. He

It is an attack upon slavery, in six books, and modelled upon the Iliad. Avenia, an African princess, is captured by slavers and sold to a planter in the West Indies, where, after being mistreated, she commits suicide by casting herself over a precipice. "The Penitential Tyrant,"¹ by the same author, although written earlier, was not published until 1805, the same year as "Avenia." "It was a personal knowledge of the wretched fate of the exiled sons of Africa," says Branagan, "which induced me, with reluctance, to commence author, though born with a love to poetry. . . . Every slave ship which arrives at Charleston is to our nation what the Grecians' wooden horse was to Troy." "The Penitential Tyrant" is a reformed slave trader. In his penitence of four cantos is depicted many a vivid slave scene, horrible, to be sure, but apparently true. If we may believe Branagan the "Slave Ship" of Turner is no exaggeration. None of these satires can lay claim to much poetic merit, but the deep sincerity and indigna-

was a great traveller, beginning his many voyages when thirteen years of age. He had been in Africa and there had seen the operations of the slave traders. He finally settled in Philadelphia.

¹ Canto IV of "The Penitential Tyrant" is identical with Canto VI of "Avenia."

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tion which they express, cast a shadow of coming events.¹

In 1796 "Geoffry Touchstone" was writing his amusing satiric skit on the Philadelphia merchant-poet, John Swanwick. The Muses, in a spirit of levity, invite Swanwick to mount Apollo's horse, Pegasus. They pretend to praise his horsemanship, and the rider does not see the irony of their remarks. He becomes his own trumpeter. There is a mock coronation, after which it is suddenly announced that a ship has just arrived from "St. Andero." Swanwick, now the merchant again, flies to the wharf in his hurry to make money, forgetting Pegasus and the Muses. Arrived at the wharf in all the finery of his coronation outfit, he so excites the laughter of the sailors and porters, that with an angry gesture, he tears off his crown, curses the Muses, and is "himself again." In swift racy anapests "The House of Wisdom in a Bustle" was written by the same author two years later, in 1798. This poem burlesques the personal encounter between Lyon of Vermont and Griswold of Connecticut, which took place in the Congress of the United States at a time when

¹ Joel Barlow's excellent anti-slavery verses in "The Columbiad" should be noted. See "Patriotic Verse."

America was threatened with a war with France. The author of these two poems was a satirist of unusual ability. He had a fine sense of humor, was unerring in aim, and was proficient in the mechanics of verse. Had he written a longer and more ambitious poem, it is probable that we should have had to rank it with "McFingal." The same event which inspired "The House of Wisdom in a Bustle" was also celebrated by a less able poet in a poem in four cantos called "The Spunkiad; or, Heroism Improved. A Congressional Display of Spit and Cudgel."

"Of Legislators, fraught with spunk, I sing."

"Touchstone" had made sport of the event. The author of "The Spunkiad," whose name is unknown, expresses a note of genuine shame that such unseemly brawls are possible among the nation's representatives.

William Biglow, at one time Head Master of the Boston Latin School, in 1799 delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard a poem called "Education," for the most part a witty satire on the educational methods then in vogue. The author attempts

"To prove that men were fools in every age."

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It is not so pointed as "The Progress of Dulness," but it is sufficiently clever to be of interest and value. Upon the same occasion there was also read before the Phi Beta Kappa a poem entitled "Physiognomy," by Joseph Bartlett, the eccentric Boston lawyer and adventurer. It is more or less of a hodge-podge and bears the ear-marks of those peculiarities for which the personal character of the author was noted. The poem is dedicated to critics of every description as a "delicious morceau for their malicious appetites." First is described the physiognomy of the universe before creation, then of creation itself, of the animals, birds, and fishes. Finally he arrives at the highest type in the physical world:

"Forgive, my friends, if I presume to scan
And shew the Physiognomy of Man."

The miser and the fop are satirized; then the critic

"Who damns all genius with a haughty sneer,
Who walks the street with stiff, important air,
And judges merit by the rules of Blair."

Of Washington he says:

"Next to our God our thanks we owe to you."

Branching off into the female department of the human species Bartlett satirizes the scold and offers words of praise to the ideal woman of "mild blue eye" and "dimpled chin."

A vigorous objection to the pernicious influence of commercialism upon literature in America is recorded in "The Present State of Literature,"¹ a poem by Warren Dutton. Coming fresh from the classics, the author is pessimistic over the prospect of producing a great literature in a nation whose people are those

"Who never speak, but Traffick is their theme;
Who never sleep, but Mammon guides their dream;
Through justling crowds, with pointed elbows steer,
Untouched by friendship's claim, or misery's tear;
Till 'gainst all ills they've made a golden fence,
And then set up for men of taste and sense."

The following year, 1801, in Philadelphia, an "Olio; or, Satirical Poetic Hodge-Podge" was printed. The author is unknown. A portion of the composition is in verse and is a personal attack upon some obnoxious persons of Philadelphia. William Cobbett again comes in for a share of criticism.

¹ Delivered in New Haven, at the Public Commencement of Yale College, September 10, 1800. Published the same year at Hartford.

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In easy flowing couplets, but with nothing except its subject to mark it out from among the many satires of the period, is the poem called "Boston" by Winthrop Sargent. The cheapness and ugliness of Boston houses, the dangers of foreign immigration, the tendency to foppishness, the lack of protection in case of fire, the scurrility of the press, the cheap dramas at the theatre, and the general low taste in literature are some of the things from which Bostonians suffer. At the time in which "Boston" was written, in 1803, the conditions in other large American cities were no doubt much the same as those described by Sargent as existing in the metropolis of Massachusetts. Although a critic Sargent is not a pessimist: He has great faith that Boston will eventually be the city *par excellence* of America.

About a month previous to the publication of "The Hamiltoniad"¹ of Williams, there was printed at Philadelphia a poem by the same name, written by Joseph R. Hopkins. The former was political in treatment, the latter is personal. Hopkins highly eulogizes Hamilton, "whose talents in our western Hemisphere shone like the Aurora Borealis," but he has words of censure for the "infatuation" which led him into the

¹ Treated under "Political Satire." Published in 1804.

error of engaging in a duel. Burr is mentioned with infinite scorn. An appendix of twenty-three pages contains interesting notes and valuable letters of Hamilton, Burr, Van Ness, Pendleton, Mason, etc.

English critics did not usually welcome the productions of American authors with such cordiality as was accorded to the "Terrible Tractoration" of Thomas Green Fessenden when it was published in London, in 1803. Laudatory notices were written for the *Gentleman's Magazine*,¹ the *Critical Review*,² the *Anti-Jacobin Review*,³ and the *Literary Review*.⁴ The poem deserved this appreciation, for it is one of the best written and most effective of American satires. It is a defence of Dr. Elisha Perkins and his Metallic Tractors, then being exploited in England, and arousing much opposition in the ranks of the medical profession. The Tractors were an invention designed to treat disease by means of Galvanism. Fessenden was a firm believer in the efficacy of the process, and in the "Terrible Tractoration" took up the cudgel in defence of his countryman. Anticipating the charge of eccentricity which would very likely be made against his poem, he says that "he had

¹ January, 1804.

² April, 1803.

³ January, 1804.

⁴ September, 1803.

rather introduce indefensible eccentricities, and run the hazard of the lash of the critic, than to 'threat his reader, not in vain, with sleep.' " The satire is never dull. There is much surprise and some oddity, and the author makes many telling hits against the opponents of the Tractors. The bulky notes which accompany the octosyllabics are as witty and as ironical as the verse itself.

If Fessenden is sometimes eccentric in the turn of thought and phrase, far more so is William Scales, A.M., LL.D., F.R.S., whose "The Quintessence of Universal History," 1806, is one of the curiosities of American satire. The poem itself, undigested though it is, is interesting, but our attention is particularly centered upon the dedication: "To the University of Cambridge in New England. . . . In 1767 I entered thy walls and the first glory I saw in thee was waggery, dissipation and romance, which continued to my graduation in 1771. As soon as I applied to study, great Locke was delivered to me, to study whom I found to be a miserable destroyer of the understanding; after that, renowned Sir Isaac Newton came before me for examination, and I found him a great fabricator of falsehoods, and a destroyer of the work of God. . . . Wherefore let me declare unto thee, O thou

seminary of sophistry, falsehood and folly! thou fountain of mythology, deception and iniquity, and school of deceivers and impostors, that thy destruction is determined of the Lord of hosts, except thou speedily repentest and wastest thyself from all thy filthiness and putttest away the instruments of thy abominations; wherefore, to give thee a clear view of thyself, the following poem is dedicated to thee." The poem itself tells of the iniquity, deception, and idolatry of the Christian age and implies that this condition is no worse than the state of things at Harvard.

Less serious in tone is Blauvelt's "Fashion's Analysis; or, The Winter in Town," imitated from "The Rape of the Lock," and published in New York in 1807. The events narrated are supposed to take place at a ball, and the foibles of fashion are made the point of attack. The author's idea of satirizing his own verse in the notes under the guise of "Gregory Glacier, Gent.," is unique and well carried out. Blauvelt was much more proficient in the use of prose than of verse. The preface and notes are composed in a most excellent style, discovering a strong influence of Addison.

The social satires which we have noted have had a more or less direct bearing upon American

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manners and customs, institutions and social movements of the time. Indirectly the personal satire has had a similar bearing. Impartial criticism of general social conditions develops late in the literary history of a nation, and we do not expect to find such satire occupying the attention to the same extent as the more immediate and absorbing events of national and political life. The one is intimately associated with the other, however, and is of almost equal value in forming a clear conception of the body politic.

(c) *Patriotic Verse*

While the struggle for political freedom was in progress the poets, as we have seen, had entered with spirit into the contest and had contributed effective satire to the cause of liberty. When the smoke of battle had cleared away and the great concept of independence began to dawn upon Americans in its full significance; when they saw that they were free, that they were a new nation which had taken its place among the great nations of the world with all the opportunities which such a fact implied,—then it was that the pride of accomplishment and power inspired the poetic visions of future greatness

which for a few years were the most noteworthy feature of American verse. Had England continued to exert a just and conciliatory control over the colonies as in the reign of the first two Georges, it is probable that the increasing wealth and importance of the New World possessions would have inspired, even then, a certain amount of patriotic verse. As early as 1723 the "*Gloria Britannorum*"¹ had indicated a tendency in that direction. Whoever the author was he was "a lover of the present happy constitution," and he had an Englishman's ardent love for England and English liberty. The victories of Marlborough are here relished by an American in as great a measure as were the successes of Washington by the Americans of a half-century later. The patriots of 1775 saw the red-coats fleeing after the Battle of Lexington with no greater exultation than our author expresses when, in describing the Battle of Blenheim, he says:

"Charon grew faint with ferrying souls to Hell,
Such hecatombs of haughty Frenchmen fell."

In marked contrast to the "*Gloria Britannorum*" is the "*Columbia's Glory*; or, British

¹ Authorship not definitely known. Probably by Francis Knapp. Published in Boston.

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Pride Humbled," by Benjamin Young Prime, published in New York in 1791. The intervening years up to 1772 had produced no patriotic verse of importance. After the accession of George the Third in 1760, the rapidly increasing acts of British oppression stimulated for the most part only the belligerent activity of political satire. The only exception worthy of note was an earlier poem by Prime himself, called "Britain's Glory; or, Gallic Pride Humbled," inspired by the capture of Quebec in 1759. Upon this poem is paraphrased his better known "Columbia's Glory, or British Pride Humbled." The loyalty to the crown and sovereignty of England expressed in the first has given place in the second poem to the loyal enthusiasm of a patriotic American citizen. The King no more is lord. George the Third is unsparingly condemned. On the other hand, the thirteen-page appreciation of Washington in this poem is by far the best of the hundreds of Washington eulogies. Although of such extended length it contains little repetition. It is not fulsome nor does it savor of flattery. An ardent, sincere, generous, and outspoken admiration of a living ideal, this poem best represents the almost idolatrous attitude towards Washington common at the close of the Revo-

lutionary War. As a whole the "Columbia's Glory" is one of the best poems written in America during the eighteenth century. It is rapid in movement with easy flowing lines of varying length; is unified, pointed, and on an unusually high poetic plane. The vocabulary is fluent, without the common striving after the unusual word or the even worse use of the conventional word. A fair and temperate attitude is maintained throughout; patriotic, but with no savor of jingoism, and the closing prayer for the nation's future is eminently sane. The program here outlined is statesman-like and worthy of all praise.

With less spirit, but with equal sincerity, is the poem called "The Prospect of America," inscribed to Washington, "the Second Fabius," and written by John Brown Ladd, the young and unhappy poet of Rhode Island. The educators, poets, and patriots of America are celebrated, and it is interesting to note that John Maylem receives his share of applause. This tendency, already noted, to record, with brief poetic characterization, a long list of Revolutionary heroes, is better exemplified in "The Declaration of Independence," 1793, a poem by George Richards, the Universalist divine of Boston. Accompanied with many notes the author

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has, in this poem, "handed to the public every patriotic name from New Hampshire to Georgia, who dared to explain the wrongs of America and pronounce her independent of Great Britain."

"Shall not the Muse record each patriot name
On the rich tablet of harmonic sound?"

Although there are frequent breaks in the harmony, still, in describing these "heroes thick as stars" the author's manifest pride and love of country is exhilarating. Of similar character are the poems "Peace," by Samuel Low, and Paul Allen's "Poem on The Happiness of America." The first was published shortly after the ratification of peace, and celebrates the achievements of American generals and patriots. There is a look into the future, to the time

"When Roman greatness shall in us revive,"

and a closing prayer that such prosperity may not result in the fate which befell Rome.

"Oh! long preserve, kind Heaven, our prosperous
state,

And make us *good*, as well as wise and great!"

Allen's poem is an eulogy on Washington, Franklin, and Hancock, with some portion de-

voted to a contrast between the war-ridden countries of Europe and the happiness of America, where

“ No happy period, since the world began
E'er brought such blessings on the race of man.”

The “ happy period ” to which Allen refers is best exploited in the verses of three poets, Philip Freneau, “ The Poet of the Revolution,” and two of the most prominent of the “ Hartford Wits,” David Humphreys and Joel Barlow. Freneau, whose poetic temper was naturally idealistic, and who became a political versifier rather through motives of patriotism than because of any special inclination towards that species of composition, had, in 1771, delivered upon Commencement Day ¹ at Princeton a poem called “ The Rising Glory of America.” Part of this poem was by Brackenridge, but in the publication in 1772 this portion was not included. Patriotic pride, love of country, and a poetic exaltation, inspired by what he considered to be the country's boundless possibilities and glorious future, are characteristic of this early poem. The history of America is reviewed from its discovery by Columbus up to the time of writing and closes with a prophetic look into

¹ September 25, 1771.

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the future, to a rapidly approaching time of "Independence, Liberty, and Peace." Four years later the "American Liberty" demonstrates that Freneau was eager for the then impending fray and in no wise dubious as to the outcome. The ringing challenge here thrown to the British concludes with the confident, exulting shout that America shall be free

"From Ocean's edge to Mississippi's streams."

After three years of battle and bloodshed Freneau has not lost courage, for in the "America Independent," written in 1778, five years before the close of the struggle, he is even more sanguine of final success. He looks upon independence as already assured, and pictures in vision the greatness of the nation which is to rise upon the ashes of England's pride. "The Rising Empire,"¹ published in 1790, seven years after the Treaty of Peace, paints the vision as a fact. Here are described the physical characteristics, the inhabitants, with their manners and customs, and a brief historical sketch of Rhode Island, Connecticut, or "The Land of Foxes," Massachusetts, The Long Island Dutch, or "A Ba-

¹ Published in sections at different times in the *New York Daily Advertiser*.

tavian Picture," Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The poem contains much deft provincial characterization, and although throughout Freneau preserves a patriotic attitude, he cannot refrain from occasionally poking fun at some of the people,—the very ones, too, in whom he has a pride. Connecticut is laughed at good-naturedly as the place where

" Bards of huge fame in every hamlet rise,
Each (in idea) of Virgilian size;
Even beardless lads a rhyming knack display—
Iliads begun, and finished in a day! "

If this is a reference to the "Hartford Wits," which seems probable, it must include David Humphreys, who, as a matter of fact, was much more widely admired as a writer of purely patriotic verse than Freneau himself. Humphreys had been an active participant in the war, and had risen to the rank of aid-de-camp of Washington, with whom he always maintained a warm personal friendship. His first poem to attract general attention was the "Address To The Armies of The United States of America," written in 1782 while in camp and with the purpose "to inspire our countrymen, now in arms, or who may hereafter be called into the field, with perseverance and fortitude,

through every species of difficulty and danger, to continue their exertions for the defence of their country, and the preservation of its liberties. . . . The writer endeavored to show his countrymen the superior advantages for happiness which they possessed; to dissipate their gloomy apprehensions, by the exhibition of consolatory anticipations; and to make them think favorably of their own situation when compared with that of other nations." The poem was written almost at the close of the war,— "now the sixth year of independence smiles." After a résumé of the war to date, the poet looks into the future, to the time when there will be freedom, peace, and plenty in the land. The picture drawn of the boundless possibilities of the Middle West and of the happiness there awaiting must have been truly encouraging and inspiring to the tired and tattered companies of Washington's army. The "Address" was translated into French by the Marquis de Chastellux, the soldier friend of the author, and was widely read and popular in France, as well as in America.

Even more popular than the "Address" was "A Poem on The Happiness of America," Portsmouth, 1790, written while the author was abroad on diplomatic service, eight editions of

which were exhausted in little more than four years. In alluding to his previous poem the author remarks: "Since this poem was written, by the establishment of a general government, and the concurrence of fortunate events, scenes of happiness have been realized in this country, which were considered by some altogether chimerical. And the prospects which are now expanding before our view, seem peculiarly calculated to excite us to greater exertions, not only for promoting the national prosperity, but even for producing such examples in civil policy as will tend essentially to the amelioration of the human lot." The joys of peace and industry, both of which were very dear to the heart of Humphreys, are celebrated. Rural, domestic happiness is most to be desired. An odor of the open air and country pervades the poem, and there are other indications that the romantic spirit has winged its way across the Atlantic. Especially good is the description of rural New England. Here, as in the "Good News from New England,"¹ it is the northern winter which appeals to and receives the greater part of the poet's attention. The commercial possibilities of American agriculture and manufacture are emphasized. These are further exploited in Hum-

¹ See "Historical Verse."

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phreys's next production, the "Poem on the Future Glory of the United States of America." The author, "fully persuaded of the magnitude of the blessings which await us in the future, wishes to impress the same conviction on the minds of his fellow citizens." The first two poems of Humphreys overflow with enthusiastic confidence in the glorious destiny awaiting the new nation. Now, although still a courageous optimist, the poet is beginning to see and understand the problems and difficulties arising from a new and republican form of government. The threat of anarchy and of the "wars which must arise" is sobering his patriotic muse.

Humphreys's next poem, the best of all his productions, is "A Poem on The Industry of The United States of America," Philadelphia, 1794, written in Lisbon when the author was ambassador at the court of Portugal. In the address which precedes the poem the poet explains what he considers to be his own mission as a versifier: "The main scope of the author's principal productions in verse, has been to indicate to his fellow citizens, in a connected manner, the measures best calculated for increasing and prolonging the public felicity. He deemed the success of our revolution the broad basis on which this superstructure was to be built. . . .

Having attempted to furnish his countrymen with some seasonable arguments and reflections on these subjects, he proposes now to show the prodigious influences of national industry in producing public and private riches and enjoyment." Not only temporal prosperity, but moral strength, as well, says Humphreys, follow upon the footsteps of industry. Historical examples are cited to prove the disintegrating effects of idleness and luxury upon national welfare. The doctrine of Protection is outlined and the poem vigorously assails the pernicious influence of slavery. The poem closes with a description of Connecticut and an apostrophe to this "model of free states." It excels in easy and fluent versification, in its clear-cut purpose and thorough sincerity. There is a crisp, intellectual alertness in this poem which is not so noticeable in the others, and which indicates that the subject was of especial value in the mind of the author.

"A Poem on The Love of Country," 1803, which follows, was written while Humphreys was ambassador at Madrid, and is in celebration of the twenty-third anniversary of Independence. It is dedicated to King Louis of Spain, from whom the author received a generous letter of thanks. The poet claims that "The Love

of Country " is a dissertation on, just as the poem called " The Death of Washington " was an exemplification of, real patriotism. Humphreys had originally no thought of the publication of his writings in permanent form. Later he corrected them and the reason which he assigns for his revision is of sufficient interest, because of the allusion to Pope's influence on American literature, to quote in full: " If he [Humphreys] wrote rather carelessly to please himself in the first instance, when he contemplated consigning his writings to the press, he would not treat his readers with so little consideration as not to attempt to gratify them, by giving his performances all the *correctness* in his power. It is not meant to be insinuated that the literary appetite has been so pampered, as to become depraved or fastidious. But at a time when, in the British dominions and the United States, every poet who aspires to celebrity, strives to approach the perfection of Pope in the sweetness of his versification, it is conceived the public is too much accustomed to be regaled with such delicacies, to relish any poetical entertainment which is totally destitute of them." This in itself is almost sufficient to discourage a search for originality in Humphreys's verses. His poems are, in fact, conventional

eighteenth century verse, always written in heroic couplet and always modelled upon Pope. The charge of monotony which is often brought against his poems has some justification. It should be remembered, however, that these compositions were published separately, and at various times, and that the general subject of them all, the glorification of the Republic, was of immense current interest. This is evidenced in the popularity of the poems as seen in the many editions which were demanded by the public. Freneau was a fighter; Humphreys a philosopher and panegyrist. He had none of the satiric humor which makes Freneau so readable. He was, however, intensely earnest and sincere, and there never lived a more loyal American. Conventional verse it is, to be sure, but through it all there glow the patriotism and the enthusiasm of a devotee. Humphreys voiced the mind and heart of thousands of his fellow countrymen, and he deserves to live in the history of American literature as the poet who best expressed and interpreted the great wave of patriotism and nationality which surged through the hearts of Americans at the close of the Revolution.

This honor would have been allotted to Joel Barlow had he been less ambitious, and had his

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execution been commensurate with his aim. Barlow was a bigger man in every way than David Humphreys. As a statesman, a financier, a man of affairs, Barlow was a person of brilliant and exceptional ability. As a poet, too, he had powers which, with proper pruning and training, might have resulted in productions of permanent beauty. That this army chaplain, honorary citizen of the French Republic, spectacular financier and negotiator of national treaties, had a magnificent and poetic vision there can be no question. Had he not attempted to soar so high, in flights which his talents could not sustain; had he been content to give us his spontaneous self as in "The Hasty Pudding," and to class himself with lesser bards than Homer and Virgil, much could have been forgiven. This man of the world who, in his relations with princes and kings, displayed remarkable wisdom and tact, at one period in his life lost the sense of true proportion, and wrote "The Columbiad." "The Vision of Columbus,"¹ upon which the larger poem is based,

¹"The Vision of Columbus" was published in nine books; "The Columbiad" in ten. The "Vision" has 4776 lines; the "Columbiad" has 7350 lines or 2574 more than the shorter poem. The extra lines are accounted for by the addition of a tenth book and by enlarging the other books. Many of the lines in the former have been re-

was published, in modest form, in 1787, and received favorable notice in America, France, and England. Although too long it was exactly what the title indicated,—a vision. The talents which it displayed were sufficient to bring its author at once prominently before the public as a leading American man of letters. Stimulated by this success into an incomprehensible and inordinate vanity, Barlow at once began preparations for the enlargement of his poem into the epic form. "The Columbiad" was published in Philadelphia in 1807, in quarto, dedicated to the author's intimate friend, Robert Fulton, and embellished with twelve engravings from designs by Smirke, executed by the best London engravers. The edition was so large and costly that only men of means could afford a copy. There was something in the overgrown size of the book so in accord with the inflated plan of the poem that critics were not slow in appropriating the idea. "The Columbiad" was as generally condemned as "The Vision" had been applauded. The principal idea of the poet is sim-

modelled in the latter poem. Books II and III of the "Vision" are practically unchanged and become Books II and III of "The Columbiad." The other books are all enlarged and revised. The two poems are so nearly alike, however, that the same criticism will apply to each.

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ple enough.¹ Columbus, lying in chains in a dungeon of King Ferdinand's palace in Valladolid, is bemoaning his fate when suddenly

"O'er all the dungeon, where black arches bend,
The roofs unfold, and streams of light descend."

This supernatural manifestation is the prelude to the entrance of Hesper, brother of Atlas, "the guardian Genius of the Western Continent," who proceeds to lead Columbus forth to the Mount of Vision "which rises o'er the western coast of Spain." From this tremendous height, and with the aid of miraculous vision granted by Hesper, Columbus scans the world of the past, present, and future, and is recompensed for his misery in the knowledge that his great discovery is destined to work through untold ages for the amelioration of mankind. Over seven thousand lines are required to portray and interpret the glorious destiny which is to be America's. After a description of the physical characteristics of the new continent, and a discussion of the origin of tribes and na-

¹ For an excellent and more extended synopsis of the poem than we have space for here, see the essay entitled "The Literary Strivings of Mr. Joel Barlow" in "Three Men of Letters," by Moses Coit Tyler. New York, 1895, pp. 147-165.

tions, the poet digresses into a long history of Peru. Having next explained the beneficent influence upon Europe of Columbus's discovery, Hesper turns again to America. Here the formation of the colonies, the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars, are each in turn exhausted for material to feed the appetite of this insatiate epic.

The national freedom in which the Revolution resulted serves as a basis of attack upon African slavery in America. Why deny to the negro that personal liberty for which the colonists themselves have just shed so much blood? This portion of the poem is one of the most commendable, and in places rises to high poetic majesty. The last two books concern themselves with a philosophic disquisition on the general nature of progress and enlightenment, in which republicanism is the most efficacious factor, and the poem closes with an optimistic look into the future, to the time when wars shall cease and when all mankind will be united in political unity and brotherly love. Even as a "vision" such a poem must have appeared grandiose in the hands of any but a poet of the first rank, and not even genius could have moulded it into epic form. It lacks the carrying power of epic narrative, and is destitute of the first of all con-

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siderations, epic unity. The digressions are too many and lengthy, and are too loosely hung upon the framework of the central idea. In reading the poem one is impressed with the lack of compactness, of consistency, of purpose, of goal. The mind of the poet is "uneasily swelling"¹ with some great conception of which he is not master. The imagery, for the most part, is laborious and vague, and the vocabulary extravagant. When "The Columbiad" was issued, twenty years had passed since the publication of "The Vision of Columbus." In the meantime America had been developing a taste for letters and had made some advance in the field of literary criticism. Moreover, these twenty years had seen tremendous strides in the growth of Romanticism, and "The Columbiad," with its heroic verse, came, a belated traveller, to find the school of Pope in eclipse, and Wordsworth, Scott, and Coleridge the new captains of literary progress.

But while "The Columbiad" failed as a work of art, it will live in literary history, partly because of the titanic nature of the failure itself, but more especially because of the impulse which gave it birth. Barlow, as all the "Hartford Wits," was filled with a genuine and overflow-

¹ Moses Coit Tyler. "Three Men of Letters," p. 133.

ing love of country, not a provincial passion, but one, as we have seen, broad enough to include in vision the whole of mankind. He was a thorough republican, and hoped and believed that the nations of the world would all eventually adopt that form of government. Moreover, the ethical purpose of the poem is evident in all parts of the work. "My object," he says, "is altogether of a moral and political nature. I wish to encourage and strengthen, in the rising generation, a sense of the importance of republican institutions, as being the great foundation of public and private happiness, the necessary aliment of future and permanent meliorations in the condition of human nature."¹ And in a letter to his friend Henri Gregoire, formerly Bishop of Blois, in reply to the latter's assertion that "The Columbiad" was detrimental to religion, Barlow says: "On the contrary, I believe, and you have compelled me on this occasion to express my belief, that the Columbiad, taken in all its parts of text and notes and preface, is more favorable to sound and rigid morals, more friendly to virtue, more clear and unequivocal in pointing out the road to national dignity and individual happiness, more energetic in its denunciations of tyranny and oppression

¹ Preface, XIII. Edition of 1809.

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in every shape, injustice and wickedness in all their forms, and consequently more consonant to what you acknowledge to be the spirit of the gospel, than all the writings of all that list of Christian authors of the three last ages whom you have cited as the glory of Christendom, and strung them on the alphabet, from Addison to Winkelman. Understand me right, my just and generous friend; I judge not my poem as a work of genius. I cannot judge it nor class it nor compare it in that respect, because it is my own. But I *know* it is a moral work; I *can* judge and *dare* pronounce upon its tendency, its beneficial effect upon every candid mind, and I am confident you will yet join me in opinion.”¹

This frank statement forced from the author in self-defense may be accepted as essentially true. As an opponent of war, of slavery, of every kind of moral and political evil, as an upholder of personal and institutional virtue, Joel Barlow's “Columbiad” was in spirit distinctly ethical. And in this it was distinctly American and a legitimate descendant of the earlier Puritan literature. “The Columbiad,”

¹ Letter to Henri Gregoire, Bishop, Senator, Comte of The Empire and Member of The Institution of France, in Reply to His Letter on The Columbiad, p. 8. Washington City, 1809.

then, while a failure as a work of art, deserves recognition in the history of American literature because it typified three of the most important national characteristics of the time,—love of country, enthusiasm for republican principles, and emphasis upon the ethical in its application to national life. This is what Professor Tyler has in mind when he remarks: "And this huge political and philosophical essay in verse, the writing of which formed the one real business of Barlow's life, may be accepted by us, whether we are proud of the fact or not, as an involuntary expression, for that period, of the American national consciousness and even of the American national character itself, as sincere and as unflinching as were, in their different ways, the renowned state-paper of Jefferson, the constitution of 1789, and Washington's farewell address."¹ Humphreys, Freneau, and the lesser writers of patriotic verse who sang during and immediately following the War of the Revolution, must, like Barlow, be judged from the standpoint rather of the vision than of the song. They loved their country, their enthusiastic verses were in tune to the heart-beats of their fellow countrymen, and there need surely be no loss of literary self-esteem when the critics of a

¹ Moses Coit Tyler. "Three Men of Letters," p. 170.

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later era, who worship at the shrines of Poe and Whitman, pause for a moment in token of respect to the sincere, sane and wholesome productions of lesser singers, but greater men.

CHAPTER IV

IMAGINATIVE VERSE

(a) *Narrative, Pastoral, and Descriptive*

WHATEVER of fancy the seventeenth century American poets may have infused into their productions such must be looked upon as a by-product rather than as an achievement of conscious aim.¹ The Parnassian fire was burning in the hearts of many, but the general nature of condition and environment, together with the early colonial attitude towards poetry for its own sake, smothered the passion and admitted of only scattering and flame-like flights of imagination shooting up here and there amidst the decency and sobriety of practical verse. It was commendable and proper to record in verse an effort at colonization or the history of an Indian war, and it was not considered unfitting to sing in beautiful numbers of the Source from which all beauty flows, but among men who were surrounded with prim-

¹The poems of Anne Bradstreet, London, 1650, are the only notable exception. See "Moral and Didactic Verse."

itive conditions, and who were struggling to establish themselves upon a secure religious and economic foothold, there was neither time nor inclination to cultivate the more refined fields of poetry. The first half of the eighteenth century was almost as unfruitful in pure poetry as had been the preceding hundred years. Not until about 1750 was there sufficient lull in the stress of active colonization so that men could pause and look about them in a mood of contemplation. The poems of James Ralph, Franklin's associate in Philadelphia, were written earlier, but he was living in London at the time and he had, therefore, the inspiration of contact with Pope, Swift, and other brilliant wits of the metropolis. His "Night," which was satirized in "The Dunciad,"¹ was published in London in 1728, a poem in blank verse in four books and dedicated to the Earl of Chesterfield. It is modelled upon Thomson's "Seasons," three divisions of which had been recently published, and purports to be a description of night as it appears to a "contemplative soul" in the different seasons of the year. The title is something

¹ "Silence, ye wolves, while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes Night hideous—answer him, ye owls."

—"The Dunciad," Book III, 165-6.

Ralph is also mentioned in Book I, 216.

of a misnomer, however, as the descriptions are by no means confined to night scenes. From the defense of blank verse in the preface, and from the assertion that Nature is the original of his poem, we are led to expect something of the romantic kind. Disillusion follows rapidly upon a perusal of the first lines. Ralph admired Thomson, and even had a very little of his spirit, but he was not sufficiently strong to break away from the domination of the old school. Conventionality could hardly go further than in this poem. It has the glib tone of something learned by rote, and the only art which Ralph here displays is in the nicety and discrimination with which he invariably picks the most conventional epithet. Pope did him no injustice.

In "Clarinda, or the Fair Libertine," published the following year, 1729, in four cantos of heroic couplet, there is some improvement. Ralph breathes more freely in an atmosphere of eighteenth century social London than in the romantic and chilly air of a night scene on the moors. "Zeuma; or The Love of Liberty," was likewise published in 1729. In this poem, dedicated to the Duke of Newcastle—Ralph was by no means impractical—the author returns to the use of blank verse, and in a narrative of one hundred and thirty-two pages tells

the story of a war between the Spaniards and Zeuma, a king of Peru,—a war which results in the defeat and death of the latter. Some love element and certain passages of weird uncanniness may be noted. This is the best of Ralph's poems, and shows that he at least had some little poetic talent. Perhaps the fact that it is semi-historical may account for its superiority, for as an historian Ralph was not a subject for ridicule. His "History of England" was favorably received, and had the distinction of being praised by Charles James Fox. If he had applied his energies as persistently to history as he did to poetry, it is probable he might have achieved some prominence. The same, by the way, may be said of Joel Barlow, who both by education and experience was well fitted to write the history of the American Revolution, a task which Jefferson had long urged him to undertake.

Another of Franklin's literary associates in Philadelphia was George Webb, who, as recorded in the "Autobiography," was "lively, witty, good-natured, and a pleasant companion; but idle, thoughtless, and imprudent to the last degree." In 1731, Webb published a comparatively short poem called "Batchelors' Hall."¹

¹ Published complete in Duyckinck—"Cyclopedia of American Literature," Vol. I, pp. 101, 102.

The "Hall" referred to was a clubhouse of bachelors situated near Philadelphia on the Delaware River, devoted, presumably, to science and philosophy, but, if report be true, occasionally dedicated as a shrine to Bacchus. Some criticism had been aroused, and the poem is a defense of the bachelors' hall and the purposes for which it was built. The philosophic dignity after which Webb strives in this poem leaves an impression of insincerity, and we have a suspicion that the revels at the Hall were not, indeed, entirely devoted to literary improvement. The love of country life and retirement suggested in Webb's poem is better exemplified in the "Philosophic Solitude; or, The Choice of a Rural Life,"¹ by William Livingston, afterwards Governor of New Jersey, first published in New York in 1747, and destined to be both popular and influential. These thirty-two pages of heroic couplet exhibit eighteenth century formalism along with real romantic feeling. The poem is not a mere literary exercise, stiff and conventional, but springs from a genuinely lyric impulse. The author was only twenty-four years of age when the poem was written, and he was affected by the "Il Penseroso" of youth:

¹ Reprinted 1762, 1769, and 1790. Found in "American Poems," Litchfield, 1793, and in "The Columbian Muse," New York, 1794.

"I'd live retired, contented, and serene,
Forgot, unknown, unenvied and unseen."

It was late in life before Livingston gained that philosophic solitude for which he so ardently longed, and he gained it then only imperfectly. There are many evidences of a scholarly mind in the poem, and the verse is smooth and not inferior to that in the many English imitations of Pomfret.

Three years later, in 1750, Joseph Green,¹ the "Sydney Smith of New England," published in Boston his very laughable "Entertainment for a Winter's Evening, being a full and true Account of a very strange and wonderful Sight seen in Boston, on the twenty-seventh of December, 1749, at noon day," which cleverly describes an incident of a drunken parson, and how he introduced his tipsy companions to his congregation as fellow Masons, afterwards returning with them to the ale-house. The poet first addresses Clio, "renown'd for story-telling":

"O come and in thy verse declare
Who were the men and what they were,

¹ Born in Boston, 1706. Died in England, 1780. A prominent satirist during the Revolution. Noted for his verse combats with Mather Byles.

And what their names, and what their fame,
And what the cause for which they came
To house of God from house of ale,
And how the parson told his tale;
How they returned, in manner odd,
To house of ale from house of God."

The sermon which the drunken parson insists upon delivering to his astonished parishioners is amusing. With a fervent show of unsteady piety he remarks:

" 'Tis Love, pure Love, cements the whole,
Love—of the Bottle and the Bowl."

A more direct imitation of Pomfret's poem than that found in the "Philosophic Solitude" is "The Choice," by Benjamin Church,¹ Boston, 1757, a much shorter but almost as popular a poem as Livingston's. Plenty, temperance, and the leisure for scholarly pursuits, are the conditions for which the poet longs. Like Livingston he would have a perfect wife, one that is

"Fair as the op'ning rose; her person small,
Artless as parent Eve before her fall;

Not talkative, nor apt to take offence,
With female softness joined to manly sense."

¹ See under "Political Satire."

Unlike the "Philosophic Solitude," Church is less interested in nature than in books. "Awful Pope! Unequaled bard!"; Milton, "blest with a full satiety of fame;" the "unaffected Gay;" "Nature-limning Thomson"; and Dryden "glorious in defect," are some of the author's favorites. Had Church followed, which he did not,¹ the course of virtue outlined in "The Choice," he would have been indeed a friend worth having.

Five years after "The Choice" was written, in 1762, there was published in Philadelphia a poem which contained unusual promise,—"The Court of Fancy,"² by Thomas Godfrey.³ The idea was suggested by Chaucer's "House of Fame," and the transition from the Court of Fancy to that of Delusion follows closely Chaucer's change from the House of Fame to that of Rumour. The description of the wall of the Court of Fancy, moreover, is directly imitated

¹ See under "Political Satire."

² Published complete in Kettell's "Specimens of American Poetry," Vol. I, pp. 91-103.

³ Godfrey—1736-1763—is better known as the author of "The Prince of Parthia," the first American dramatic composition of importance. Godfrey also paraphrased a portion of Chaucer's "The Parlement of Fowles." See "Literary History of Colonial Pennsylvania," Jackson, pp. 83-84.

from the description of the House of Fame.
The poem begins:

“Twas sultry noon—impatient of the heat
I sought the covert of a close retreat;
Soft by a bubbling fountain was I laid,
And o’er my head the spreading branches play’d;
When gentle slumber stole upon my eyes,
And busy fiction bid this vision rise.”

A desert midnight wood where, in his dream, he appeared to be wandering, becoming suddenly illuminated by a blaze of light, is transformed into a fairy grove, through the vistas of which can be seen a beautiful palace, the Court of Fancy, where

“Dome upon dome it sparkled from on high,
Its lofty top lost in the azure sky.”

Fancy and Delusion appear with their respective trains and are described by the poet with considerable of that power which is the distinguishing characteristic of the goddess whom he is celebrating. Many of the epithets are conventional, but by no means all of them, and the poem as a whole, though closely following a model, yet displays sufficient originality and imagination to have made its author, had he had the advantages of a better education, and had he lived to more mature years, a credit to

American literature. The conclusion of the poem is less Chaucerian than Puritan:

“ ‘ Just Heaven,’ I cried, ‘ Oh! give me to restrain
Imagination with a steady rein!
Though oft she leads through Pleasure’s flowry ways
In Error’s thorny path she sometimes strays.
Let me my hours with solid judgment spend,
Nor to Delusion’s airy dreams attend;
By Reason guided, we shall only know
Those heavenly joys which Fancy can bestow! ’ ”

In 1775 Thomas Coombe¹ published in Philadelphia a book of verses, the principal poem of which was “ The Peasant of Auburn,” dedicated to Goldsmith and intended as a continuation of “ The Deserted Village.” Coombe, because of his Tory sentiment, was later, in 1777, included in the banishment of the Tories to Staunton, Virginia, but on account of sickness was finally allowed to remain in Philadelphia. This incident might very naturally have somewhat prejudiced him against America, and had it occurred two years earlier we could better understand the bitterness of attack upon all things American in this narrative poem “ The Peasant of Auburn.” Like the “ Sot-Weed Factor ”² it

¹ 1758-1822. A native of Philadelphia. Assistant Minister of Christ Church.

² See under “ Social and Personal Satire.”

was written to discourage emigration to the New World. The poem opens with a scene on the banks of the Ohio, where the peasant, Edwin, is lamenting his hard fate, which includes the death of his wife and two of his children in the voyage to America, and the capture, by the Indians, of his only remaining child. Overcome at last by so many misfortunes, the husband dies of a broken heart. It is a dreary and bitter picture, and noteworthy because of the infrequency with which it occurs in American literature.

The *real* charms of fancy, the philosophy of which Godfrey had presented, are found in the early poems of Philip Freneau more than in any other poet of our period. He was the first American to achieve lasting distinction in the realm of pure poetry. His genius, as we have said, was naturally creative and imaginative, but at the beginning of the Revolution he was forced to turn from the quiet and flowery meads where he most loved to wander, and to enter the arena of political satire. Here he did most excellent service to the cause of independence, but it was a service which others were doing, or might have done, and it is one of the most regrettable things in the history of American literature that Freneau was thus compelled to forsake that field of early inclination, the field of pure fancy and

imagination which he alone of all his contemporaries could successfully cultivate. Those were strenuous and practical times immediately preceding and during the War of the Revolution, and men had neither the time nor the patience to listen to songs which did not carry with them some practical purpose. When at last the war was over Freneau emerged from the turmoil of satire with much of the freshness and spontaneity of his earlier impulse gone. Although beautiful in themselves, one is inclined to examine most of his early poems as evidences of what might have been, rather than as finished productions. A delightfully fresh and entertaining poem in the rural spirit of the "Deserted Village," is "The American Village," published in New York in 1772. Unlike "Sweet Auburn," the American village which Freneau describes is full of life and vigor, the new vigor of a new land. The pleasing and healthful life of the American farmer is portrayed with appropriate simplicity and charm. The poet then goes back, in retrospect, to the early days of the Indian and recounts the story of Caffraro and Colma, a tragedy in which an Indian wife drowns herself in order to save her husband and son, the boat which comes to their rescue being able to carry but three people. There can be

detected in this poem the big, proud American note which we have remarked in "The Rising Glory of America."

"The Pictures of Columbus, The Genoese," is probably one of Freneau's earliest poems, though first published in the edition of 1788. It is in a series of eighteen short soliloquies, descriptions or "pictures" of scenes in the life of Columbus. They are arranged chronologically and include the important chapters of the great discoverer's career from his first petition to Ferdinand down to his death at Valladolid. This poem is probably a fragment of an epic which Freneau had planned while at college, but had abandoned. The original and romantic treatment, the vivid phrasing, the new and powerful impression which the poem makes, show that a fresh and vital influence had entered American literature. The scene in the cell of the Enchantress is imitated from the witches' scene in "Macbeth" and contains considerable of the weird power of its famous prototype. Columbus, wishing to learn the fate of his plans, goes, at midnight, to the cell of an Enchantress who lives among the hills. The Enchantress speaks:

"The staring owl her note has sung;
With gaping snakes my cave is hung;

When vulture, fed but once a week,
And ravens three together shriek,
And skeleton for vengeance cries,
Then shall the fatal curtain rise!
Two lamps in yonder vaulted room,
Suspended o'er a brazen tomb,
Shall lend their glimmerings, as you pass,
To find your fortune in that glass
Whose wondrous virtue is, to show
Whate'er the inquirer wants to know."

Another of Freneau's early productions is "The Hermit of Saba," in blank verse, though no date can be found earlier than the 1788 edition of his poems. Three mariners are shipwrecked on Saba, one of the Windward Islands in the West Indies, and are rescued by a hermit who is later murdered by the sailors for the supposed riches which his cave contains. When no gold is found the murderers feel remorse for the crime. The poem illustrates Freneau's power of employing narrative suspense.

Two poems which are almost unique among the longer productions of eighteenth century verse, in that they are purely humorous and have no motive apart from that of stimulating good-natured laughter, are Freneau's "The Expedition of Timothy Taurus, Astrologer," New York, 1775, and a much later poem, "Slender's Journey," 1787. The former, according to the author's note, was written soon after an excursion to the village near the Falls of Passaick River in New Jersey in August, 1775, under the character of Timothy Taurus, a student in astrology.¹ Representative characters, including a city broker, a deacon, a lawyer, a soldier, a parson, a doctor, a farmer, a Quaker and his two daughters, meet at the Falls of Passaick to rest and bathe in the waters. During their stay at the tavern they succeed in getting into many amusing situations, and this, together with the clever and distinct characterization of each, combine to make a very entertaining narrative. Timothy Taurus, the astrologer, who tells the story, finally leaves the Falls without paying his

¹ Some doubts have recently been cast upon the statement that Freneau actually made this visit to Passaick Falls. The allusions cannot be verified, and it is conjectured that the whole idea is imaginary or that the scene was laid somewhere near Philadelphia. See "Poems of Philip Freneau," Pattee, Vol. I, pp. 123, 124, notes.

bill, escaping from the tavern at night in a hurricane of wind and rain. The vacation journey of Robert Slender, stocking-weaver, with eight of his friends, from Philadelphia to New York, is in much the same style as the earlier poem. Slender tells the story, but there is also considerable dialogue. Whether or not Freneau had in mind the "Canterbury Tales" when he wrote these two poems cannot perhaps be determined, but there is at least sufficient similarity in the general outline of each, sufficient wholesome humor and dramatic character contrast, to suggest Chaucer's masterpiece.

Discouraged with the cold reception accorded to his early poems, Freneau, in 1776, upon the invitation of his friend Captain Hanson, left for the latter's home on the island of Santa Cruz in the West Indies, where he believed he could dream in uninterrupted quiet, out of reach of the shafts of unfriendly critics. In a letter from here he writes: "My agreeable residence at this place for above two years, off and on during the wars in America, renders the idea of it all too pleasing, and makes me feel much the same anxiety at a distance from it as Adam did after he was banished from the bowers of Eden."¹ While at Captain Hanson's home on this island

¹ *United States Magazine*, February, 1779.

Freneau composed, all in elegiac stanza, three of his most noteworthy poems,—“The Beauties of Santa Cruz,”¹ “The Jamaica Funeral,” and “The House of Night.” The first is a romantic description of the scenery, the flora, and the fauna of the island upon which he was staying. It is marked by a passionate love of the tropics and by the drowsy, dreamy spirit of the Lotus Eaters:

“Where once the Indian dames slept with their swains,
Or fondly kiss’d the moon-light eves away;
The lovers fled, the tearful stream remains,
And only I console it with my lay.

Among the shades of yonder whispering grove
The green palmittoes mingle, tall and fair,
That ever murmur, and forever move,
Fanning with wavy bough the ambient air.”

The poem abounds in stanzas and lines of singular beauty. Take, for instance, the first two lines of the one hundredth stanza:

“The drowsy pelican wings home his way;
The misty eve sits heavy on the sea.”

One may search in vain contemporary English literature for any two lines which paint a more

¹ Written in 1776. First published in 1779 in the *United States Magazine* for February.

exquisite picture. In its delicate shading and power of suggestion it is superior to the famous description of the wild duck's flight against the crimson sky of evening in "Lines to a Water-fowl." It may be noted in passing that the stanzas against slavery by their very vigor somewhat destroy the general unity of dream effect in the poem as a whole. There were slaves in Santa Cruz, and the actual sight of their unhappy condition aroused the poet's indignation just as a more philosophic view stimulated Barlow to write the better known lines against slavery in the "Columbiad."

"The Jamaica Funeral"¹ is an imaginative poem of great merit. It is a satire on worldly-minded priests, in the Chaucerian manner, though more bitter, and it appears, also, to be more or less Freneau's own early and personal philosophy of life,—an Epicurean philosophy, the philosophy of the vineyard school. This double purpose is best illustrated in the "Sermon" which the priest delivers over the dead body of Alcander. The words, which are hypocritical in a priest who professes to believe in revealed religion, are, to the poet himself, in part a real philosophy of life. The funeral ends in feasting, mirth, and dancing.

¹ Written in 1776. First published in the edition of 1786.

In many respects the strongest and most original poem produced in eighteenth century America is Freneau's "House of Night," first published in 1779 in the August number of *The United States Magazine*. The "Advertisement" states that "this Poem is founded upon the authority of Scripture, inasmuch as these sacred books assert that the last enemy that shall be conquered is Death." The poem is in the form of a vision. The scene is laid at a lonely palace at midnight, somewhere within sound of the dashing waves of the "wide extended Chesapeake." Death, "with fleshless limbs" and "eyes sunk in their sockets, dark and low," is represented as on his dying bed where, "by the dull flambeaux' glare" pale phantoms are hovering. The owner of the palace although lately having lost his wife, the young and beautiful "Aspasia," yet strives to restore to health his enemy, Death, "convinced of the excellence and propriety of that divine precept, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.'" After frantic and vain efforts to recover, Death, seeing that his end is near, makes his own epitaph and asks that it be engraved on his tombstone. He dies in agony. The funeral is described and the vision ends. The poem concludes with some precepts

by the author as to the best attitude to assume in approaching death, something in the manner of the closing lines of "Thanatopsis." From the moment that the poet enters the "mournful garden of autumnal hue," through the terrifying midnight scenes with Death where, to ease his pain, at his command "I led him upstairs and I led him down," the fearful flight from the house where "screams were heard from the distempered ground" and where at the edge of a wood he looks back to see "the infernal windows flaming red" and hears the agonized shrieks of Death; the spectral light which leads him to the grave, the tolling of the bell and the spectres hurrying by in the darkness—through all this there is maintained a weird and supernatural atmosphere strongly suggestive and hardly inferior to Coleridge or Poe. The most vividly imaginative part of the poem follows the "Epitaph" which Death has just pronounced for himself:

"Scarce had he spoke, when on the lofty dome
Rush'd from the clouds a hoarse resounding blast—
Round the four eaves so loud and sad it play'd
As though all musick were to breathe its last.

Warm was the gale, and such as travellers say
Sport with the winds on Zaara's barren waste;

Black was the sky, a mourning carpet spread,
Its azure blotted, and its stars o'ercast!

Lights in the air like burning stars were hurl'd,
Dogs howl'd, heaven mutter'd, and the tempest blew,
The red half-moon peeped from behind a cloud
As if in dread the amazing scene to view.

.

O'er a dark field I held my dubious way
Where Jack-a-lantern walk'd his lonely round,
Beneath my feet substantial darkness lay,
And screams were heard from the distemper'd
ground.

Nor look'd I back, till to a far off wood,
Trembling with fear, my weary feet had sped—
Dark was the night, but at the enchanted dome
I saw the infernal windows flaming red.

And from within the howls of Death I heard,
Cursing the dismal night that gave him birth,
Damning his ancient sire, and mother sin,
Who at the gates of hell, accursed, brought him
forth.

.

Trembling, across the plain my course I held,
And found the grave-yard, loitering through the
gloom,
And in the midst, a hell-red, wandering light,
Walking in fiery circles round the tomb.

Among the graves a spiry building stood,
Where tolling bell, resounding through the shade,
Sang doleful ditties to the adjacent wood,
And many a dismal drowsy thing it said.

.

At distance far approaching to the tomb,
By lamps and lanthorns guided through the shade,
A coal-black chariot hurried through the gloom,
Spectres attending, in black weeds arrayed.

Whose woeful forms yet chill my soul with dread,
Each wore a vest in Stygian chambers wove,
Death's kindred all—Death's horses they bestrode,
And gallop'd fiercely, as the chariot drove.

Each horrid face a grizly mask conceal'd,
Their busy eyes shot terror to my soul
As now and then, by the pale lanthorn's glare,
I saw them for their parted friend condole.

Before the hearse Death's chaplain seem'd to go,
Who strove to comfort, what he could, the dead;
Talk'd much of Satan, and the land of woe,
And many a chapter from the scriptures read.

At last he rais'd the swelling anthem high,
In dismal numbers seem'd he to complain;
The captive tribes that by Euphrates wept,
Their song was jovial to his dreary strain.

That done, they plac'd the carcase in the tomb,
To dust and dull oblivion now resign'd,
Then turn'd the chariot tow'rd the House of Night,
Which soon flew off, and left no trace behind."

As in "The Beauties of Santa Cruz," so in "The House of Night," the unity of effect—and it is more important here—is occasionally violated by some such inartistic reference as in the words of Death:

"I'll quit the world, while decently I can,
And leave the work to *George* my deputy."

The veil of unearthly illusion is here suddenly and rudely torn aside, and several stanzas are required to return to the former impression. But it is out of place to cavil at a poet who could write such poems in the face of all the discouragement and lack of appreciation which beset him. Both for his valuable services at a critical period in American history, as well as for his ability as a poet of pure creative imagination, Freneau deserves a greater place among American men of letters than has hitherto been accorded him.¹

¹ The recent three-volume critical edition of Freneau's poems by Mr. Fred Lewis Pattee, and the Freneau Bibliography by Mr. Victor Hugo Paltsits, deserve the highest

But there were other lesser poets than Freneau who were inspired by the beauty of West Indian life and climate. In London, in 1783, there was published anonymously a volume of "Poems, on Subjects arising in England and The West Indies by a Native of The West Indies." The island of Antigua is celebrated in a long poem in heroic couplet called "The Antigua Planter; or, War and Famine." It was written in the year 1779, when the French fleets had so hemmed in the island that provisions were almost exhausted. The verses have no special distinction, but the scenes are new and in the description of the country and characters there is the charm of novelty. Novel, indeed, too, is the Preface, where the author assures us that he "has humbly endeavoured to catch the vernal Zephirs, and to sing in concert with the gay birds of the evening. If he composed not in the face of the sun, he has made his harmony subservient to the chaste rays of the virgin moon, and happily exchanged the sickly vapour of scholastic oil, for the sweet perfume of the rural blossom."

"An Epistle from Yarico to Inkle," Marblehead, 1792, is a poem founded upon the refer-

approbation, and are an evidence that the poet is at last to receive more general and just recognition.

ence in the *Spectator* to the adventures of Inkle, the young gentleman of London who was wrecked in America while on a voyage to the West Indies and who was saved by Yarico the Indian maiden, with whom he speedily fell in love. Inkle later sells his deliverer into slavery and the poem recounts Yarico's last words to her lover before she kills herself. This poem is dedicated to "Saintloe" and has been ascribed by some to the Reverend John Anketell. There is little doubt, however, that it is from the hand of Isaac Story, who was born in Marblehead in 1774, graduated from Harvard in 1795, and later became a lawyer in Rutland, Massachusetts. The two concluding lines of the dedication seem conclusive in ascribing the authorship to Story:

"You, Saintloe, shall her willing thanks receive,
Whose inspiration bade the *Story* live."

The "Epistle from Yarico to Inkle" has little to recommend it beyond its simple story, which is of some interest because of itself, but especially because of its connection with the *Spectator*.

With just as little claim to recognition as poetry, but of considerable value as fact, is the

"Jamaica, A Descriptive and Didactic Poem. Book the First," in blank verse, by Bryan Edwards.¹ It is found in his "Poems, written chiefly in the West Indies" and published at Kingston, Jamaica, in 1792. The author had early planned to write a West Indian Georgic in four books, of which the poem before us was to have constituted the first, and he had nearly completed the second when, with rare sense, he decided that he "had undertaken a task to which his abilities were not competent." The poem contains much practical and interesting information about Jamaica recorded more with the eye of the historian than of the poet.

"The Bermudian," by Nathaniel Tucker, a native of the island, was published in Williamsburg in 1774. Life in Bermuda is glowingly described, and although the piece was written in youth it has youth's sensitiveness to natural beauty and is, altogether, a very creditable poem. Both in plan and sentiment there is abundant evidence that Tucker was an admirer of "The Deserted Village." Thomas Boulton, who wrote "The Voyage, a Poem in Seven Parts,"

¹ Bryan Edwards, M.P., 1743-1800. He was a native of Westbury, Wiltshire, who resided for some years in the West Indies. He was well known in his day as the author of "A History of The British Colonies in the West Indies." 2 Vols. London, 1793.

Boston, 1773, has little of Tucker's interest in the natural beauties of the world about him. He is a devout, God-fearing man who is less impressed with the might and grandeur of a storm at sea than with the fact that divine goodness allowed a safe return to his native shores. The author served as surgeon on a voyage to Africa, presumably an expedition to capture negro slaves, for in a footnote he says, "the voyage is dangerous and the Trade's unjust."

One of the many imitations of Thomson is the poem "Winter," by Samuel Low, published in 1784, and afterwards revised and altered for the 1800 edition of his poems. These sixty-one pages of heroic couplet contain nothing of that zest and vigor of winter which is so conspicuous a feature of Thomson's poem. Bits of moral and semi-satirical reflection intermingled with rambling descriptive passages are characteristic of the piece. A shorter and much better poem by the same author is his blank-verse address "To Atticus," a friend of Low's, a genius apparently, who was having a hard fight with poverty, the evils of which are recounted and advice given as to the best methods of philosophic endurance. The author, himself, as he intimates in the poem, had experienced the ills of poverty. This is one of Low's best poems. There is a

terseness and vigor about it which convinces both of the writer's sincerity and of the poem's application to the actual facts of real experience.

The sympathy for the colder seasons of the year which Low lacked may be found in abundance in the "October" and "November" of an anonymous poem in blank verse called "Rhapsody," published in New York in 1798. The poem is recommended by the author only to the perusal of those "who are finely sensible of the beauties of nature, who are pleased with something more than the music of poetry." The romantic spirit is evident throughout the descriptions of the New Jersey coast and in the ironical allusions to the vices of city life. "The pleasing calm of philosophic pleasures" is the author's ideal existence, and he would have a wife by his side, but unfortunately

" the hand
Of rigid fortune rudely intervenes,
And wrests me from the fondest smiles of hope."

A better imitation of "The Seasons," and one which contains more of the true romantic temper, although written in heroic couplet, is "Simplicity; or, Rural Sketches from Artless Innocence," by "Augustus Chatterton, Esq.

(pseudonym)," ¹ contained in the volume called "The Buds of Beauty; or, Parnassian Sprig," Baltimore, 1787. Some direct imitation of "The Deserted Village" is evident and the influence of Gray is also marked. Some of the pastoral description is excellent. Even better is "The Seasons of Life" contained in the same volume, the first of a proposed plan of four poems, each poem to represent one of the seasons of life. The only one completed was the Spring, or Childhood. Autobiographical in large part, it gives the author's own childhood up to the age of eighteen. Portions of the scenes are so simple and true as to be suggestive of those in "Snowbound." In comparison with the simple sincerity of this poem may be mentioned a long poem called "The Returned Captive" published at Hudson the same year, 1787. It aims to be romantic, but succeeds only in being ridiculous through intolerable bombast and an absurdly forced *deus ex machina*. The lines are smooth, however, and

¹ The author must have been a person of some consequence. He was a wide traveller, and his book is dedicated, with a letter, to Benjamin Franklin. One claim to distinction which the publisher offers is that "owing to the size and compactness of the types, the book contains nearly double the quantity of reading that is to be found in other books sold at the same price."

well illustrate how easy it was with a little practice for a bad versifier to write heroic couplet.

Among the early productions of Richard Alsop, one of the "Hartford Wits" and a chief contributor to "The Echo,"¹ was a poem of one hundred and twenty-two pages in heroic couplet called "The Charms of Fancy," written before the author was thirty years of age, though not published until 1856. It is a kind of Childe Harold pilgrimage over various and widely scattered parts of the world, scènes from the geography and history of North and South America, Africa, and Asia being sketched briefly with an accompaniment of notes sufficiently voluminous to be a modern commentator's remarks on the Iliad. Only the first and last portions of the poem have anything directly to do with the subject, and the seriousness of the other parts, together with the solidity of the notes, leave anything but an impression of airy fancy. Theodore Dwight, brother of Timothy, thought well enough of the "Charms of Fancy" to write: "It is striking to reflect that many years before foreigners renounced the idea that America was unfavorable to the growth of taste, the 'Charms of Fancy' should not only have been conceived, but completed: a poem in which

¹ See under "Political Satire."

many of the materials were drawn from English writers, and selected, compounded, and used, with a degree of ingenuity, taste, and poetical ability perhaps superior to any of their own poets of a similar class. Without any wish to overrate the merits of this work, we may ask our fellow admirers of genuine English poetry to name a production of a similar kind and of superior merit."

With very much more originality and fancy, and not so copiously laden with learning, is Alsop's fragment of "The Conquest of Scandinavia," published in 1793 in the Litchfield collection of American poems. The extract quoted is the introduction to the fourth book and is, so far as known, the only part of the poem ever published. The witches' scene in Macbeth is again imitated and with unexpectedly weird power, and there is some suggestion of Ossian. If "The Charms of Fancy" displays merely an antiquarian's love for "interesting novelties,"¹ there is, in "The Conquest of Scandinavia," enough of true poetic fire to make Alsop worthy of mention as a poet of the imagination apart from his famous satirical contributions to "The Echo."

Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton, the "Phi-

¹ Theodore Dwight speaks thus of Alsop.

lenia," who wrote "Beacon Hill,"¹ was also the author of two long and professedly imaginative poems,—the "Ouabi; or, The Virtues of Nature," Boston, 1790, and "The Virtues of Society," Boston, 1799. The first is a tale in which an Englishman falls in love with an Indian maiden, the outlines of which were taken from a story in Mathew Carey's "American Museum." The author speaks of the poem as being "wholly American." "From an idea of being original in my subject," she says, "I was induced to undertake the following tale. The manners and customs of the aborigines of North America are so limited and simple, that they have scarcely engaged the attention either of the philosopher or the poet." The scene of the story is laid among the tribes of the Hurons and Illinois along the Mississippi River and the theme is

"The black forest and uncultur'd vale,
The savage warrior, and the lonely stream."

Mrs. Morton is always careful of her sources and her analysis of the character of the American Indian is based largely upon the statements of William Penn and General Lincoln. She is a forerunner of Cooper in that she finds in the

¹ See under "Historical Verse."

Indian "native reason," "melting pity," "meek contentment," "changeless virtue," and "open friendship," in fact "ev'ry boon of life is here!" Of considerable interest are her accounts of Indian customs. The poem is well unified and the story is much clearer and much more entertaining than that recorded in "The Virtues of Society," published nine years later. From the "advertisement" we glean the information that "the author before attempted to portray the Virtues of Nature and she ventures on the present occasion to support by a brilliant example that the higher grades of civilized society are no less productive of the pre-eminent qualities of fidelity and magnanimity, than the unspoiled and uncultivated communities of the forest. . . . The subject, founded upon a pathetic occurrence of the American Revolution, is principally selected from a little book containing letters of General Burgoyne." The story is that of a young British soldier who is wounded and made captive. His young wife, after many hardships and dangers, succeeds in finding him and nursing him back to life, after which he is set at liberty. The verse is conventional and of no particular interest aside from its antithetical connection with its sister poem, "The Virtues of Nature." Mrs. Morton, as a poet, shows to much better

advantage in a shorter poem called "Time," published in the same volume with "The Virtues of Society." This poem is often original in epithet and phrase and displays not a little imagination.

Of about the same length is a humorous poem called "An Oration which might Have Been Delivered To The Students in Anatomy," written by Francis Hopkinson and published in his "Poems on Several Subjects," Philadelphia, 1792. Hopkinson, at the outbreak of the Revolution, represented New Jersey in Congress and was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He held important legal offices in Pennsylvania, and at the time of his death in 1791 was Judge of the District Court in that state. As a satirist Hopkinson had few equals among the men of his day, and he contributed many and effective poems against British oppression. He was a humorist of rare power, and although he composed no long poem, some of his shorter productions deserve recognition as among the best short American poems of the eighteenth century. The "Oration" to the students in anatomy is a clever burlesque in which the difficulty of gaining bodies for medical dissection is deplored and humorously commented upon. The passage in which the earth

is likened to the human body is full of lively invention.

In another poem containing certain elements of genial humor, the famous "Hasty Pudding," by Joel Barlow, there is little or no invention, but much actual fact, the whole suffused with as true a spirit of early New England life as can be found in any of the pages of Whittier. At the time of writing the poem, in 1792,¹ Barlow was sojourning at a little town in Savoy. One evening as he sat down to dine "under the smoky rafters of a Savoyard inn" there was unexpectedly placed before him a dish of New England "Hasty Pudding," for which he had many times longed in vain during his stay in Europe. Inspired by the thought of home and of his boyhood days in Connecticut, he forthwith wrote the best of his poems, simple, true, and picturesque, and fortunately unencumbered with any design of equaling the productions of the Ancients. The best of the three cantos is the first, that in general praise of hasty pudding:

"Dear Hasty Pudding, what unpromised joy
Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy!
Doom'd o'er the world through devious paths to
roam,

¹ Published in New Haven in 1796.

Each clime my country, and each house my home,
My soul is soothed, my cares have found an end:
I greet my long-lost, unforgotten friend.

.

My song, resounding in its grateful glee,
No merit claims: I praise myself in thee.
My father loved thee through his length of days!
For thee his fields were shaded o'er with maize;
From thee what health, what vigor he possess'd,
Ten sturdy freemen from his loins attest;
Thy constellation ruled my natal morn,
And all my bones were made of Indian Corn.
Delicious grain! whatever form it take,
To roast or boil, to smother or to bake,
In every dish 'tis welcome still to me,
But most, my Hasty Pudding, most in thee."

In Canto Second is told how the maize is grown from which the hasty pudding is made, and at the close of the canto there are a few vivid lines descriptive of autumn in New England. Canto Third tells how to cook and eat the hasty pudding. The description of the "husking" is good:

"The days grow short; but though the falling sun
To the glad swain proclaims his day's work done,
Night's pleasing shades his various tasks prolong,
And yield new subjects to my various song.

For now, the corn-house fill'd, the harvest home,
The invited neighbours to the *husking* come;
A frolic scene, where work, and mirth, and play,
Unite their charms to chase the hours away.
Where the huge heap lies center'd in the hall,
The lamp suspended from the cheerful wall,
Brown, corn-fed nymphs, and strong, hard-handed
beaus,
Assume their seats, the solid mass attack;
The dry husks rustle, and the corncobs crack;
The song, the laugh, alternate notes resound,
And the sweet cider trips in silence round."

There is, to be sure, in the crack of the corncobs more than a faint suggestion of the crack of Pope's "whalebones," but even so the truth of the colonial picture is in no way marred. In this poem Barlow has given evidence of what he might have done had he been impelled by less Homeric visions, and it is difficult to realize that "The Hasty Pudding" and "The Columbiad" are by one and the same hand. The author will probably live longer for having produced in a few hours this short and spontaneous, but simple and true, poem than for having composed during many of the best years of his life, the ambitious, formal, inflated, and over-elaborate epic which he was pleased to call "The Columbiad."

If "The Hasty Pudding" is one of the most creditable productions of the "Hartford Wits," there is another which by its excellence and popularity deserves to be mentioned with it,—the "Greenfield Hill" of Timothy Dwight, New York, 1794, a much longer poem, in type an epic, but less burdened by its own weight than "The Conquest of Canaan" or "The Columbiad." In the Parish of Greenfield in Connecticut there is a hill about three miles from the Sound called Greenfield Hill, upon which, in Dwight's time, there were a small village, a church, and an academy. Standing upon this eminence the writer is supposed to look off and around him and to record his impressions of the landscape, the history, and the social conditions of that part of Connecticut which is within view. The seven parts of which the poem is composed treat successively of "The Prospect," "The Flourishing Village," "The Burning of Fairfield,"¹ "The Destruction of the Pequods,"² "The Clergyman's Advice to the Villagers," "The Farmer's Advice to the Villagers," and "The Vision, or Prospect of the Future Happi-

¹ Fairfield, which lay in full view, had, a short time before, been burned by British troops under Governor Tryon.

² Suggested by the Pequod Swamp, which was in full view and near the Sound. Here most of the Pequod warriors were finally destroyed.

ness of America." "To contribute to the innocent amusement of his countrymen and to their improvement in manners, and in æconomical, political, and moral sentiments, is the object which the writer wishes to accomplish."¹ Because the author believes it to be a model of civic excellence and of social life, Connecticut is purposely exploited as the American Arcadia. "The Happiness of the inhabitants of Connecticut," says Dwight, in his notes to Part I, "appears like their manners, morals, and government, to exceed anything of which the Eastern continent could ever boast. A thorough and impartial development of the state of society in Connecticut and a complete investigation of the sources of its happiness, would probably throw more light on the true methods of promoting the interests of mankind, than all the volumes of philosophy which have been written."

The idea and plan of "Greenfield Hill" are no doubt taken from the "Cooper's Hill," of Sir John Denham, who standing upon an elevation near London addresses the river Thames flowing below. Dwight had originally intended to imitate, in each separate part of his poem, a popular English author, but finding the work too arduous soon relinquished the plan. "The little

¹ Introduction.

appearance of such a design, still remaining," he says, "was the result of distant and general recollection." Nevertheless the poem contains many echoes of the British poets: Part I of Thomson, Part II of Goldsmith, Part IV of Beattie, while suggestions or direct paraphrases of Dyer, Pope, Gay, and Denham are numerous, and are generally acknowledged in the notes. But while the style is largely imitative, the subject-matter and spirit of treatment are thoroughly American. In the emphasis which throughout the poem Dwight places upon "sweet competence" there is a suggestion of Franklin and his efforts to improve the material condition of his fellow countrymen. In this connection the excellent description of the house of Sloth in Part II should be read, where it will be seen that Dwight was too much of a Puritan to put into his lines the sensuous beauty of "The Castle of Indolence." The picture of the village pastor ¹ in Part III is well known:

"Across the way, beneath the shade,
Two elms with sober silence spread,
The Preacher liv'd. O'er all the place
His mansion cast a Sunday grace;
Dumb stillness sate the fields around;

¹ Dwight, himself, was for twelve years pastor of the church at Greenfield.

Swains ceas'd to laugh aloud, when near,
 And school-boys never sported there.
 In the same mild, and temperate zone,
 Twice twenty years, his course had run;
 His locks of flowing silver spread
 A crown of glory o'er his head.
 His face, the image of his mind,
 With grave, and furrow'd wisdom shin'd;
 Not cold, but glowing still, and bright;
 Yet glowing with October light:
 As evening blends with beauteous ray,
 Approaching night with shining day.

.

As now the evening of his day,
 Retiring, smil'd its warning ray;
 He heard, in angel-whispers, come,
 That welcome voice, that call'd him home."

Other passages of note are the attacks on war¹ and on slavery.² "Greenfield Hill" as a pastoral poem compares favorably with many of the English pastorals of the eighteenth century. In ease of versification, in truth and beauty of description, in excellence of sentiment, and in thorough Americanism, "Greenfield Hill" deserves a high rank among the more purely imaginative poems of our period. The closing lines are

¹ Part III, pp. 78-81.

² Part II, pp. 38-41.

characteristic of that faith in the future greatness of America which long indulgence in hasty pudding seems to have infused into the blood of all Connecticut bards:

" Here shall they see an era new of Fame,
Where science wreathes, and worth confers a name;
No more her temple stand in human gore;
Of human bones, her columns rise no more;
The life, by poets sung, the heavens approve,
Wisdom commend, and future ages love.
From yon blue wave, to that far distant shore,
Where suns decline, and evening oceans roar,
Their eyes shall view one free elective sway;
One blood, one kindred, reach from sea to sea;
One language spread; one tide of manners run;
One scheme of science, and of morals one;
And God's own Word the structure, and the base,
One faith extend, one worship, and one praise.
These shall they see, amaz'd; and these convey,
On rapture's pinions, o'er the distant sea;
New light, new glory, fire the general Mind,
And peace, and freedom, re-illumine mankind."

The descriptions in "Greenfield Hill" are confined to a certain locality. Three writers who have recorded in verse their impressions of American scenery and people as viewed from different localities in a course of travel, are

Michael Forrest, John D. M'Kinnon, and Alexander Wilson. The "Travels Through America" of Michael Forrest, a resident of Germantown, was published in Philadelphia in 1793. It is a poem of thirty-six pages in heroic couplet, which takes up the description from the author's departure from Ireland at the age of seventeen, follows with an account of the voyage to America, of the Newfoundland scenery, of the further voyage to Boston, where Forrest remains long enough to make patriotic addresses to Columbia, to the Bostonians, and to Bunker's Hill, of the continuation of the trip to Philadelphia and thence to Charleston, South Carolina. Throughout the journey the traveller is interested in "philosophical contemplation with respect to human happiness," and the net result of his observation is that "the less man knows the greater his content." Several pastoral episodes are introduced and scenes of love, "which is my fav'rite strain." The poem is readable, and the author, like John Holme,¹ succeeds in impressing us with a sense of strong personality. He converses with his reader in a sincere, direct manner, and this, together with some anticipated bits of humor, relieve the poem of that artificiality which is the gen-

¹ See "Historical Verse."

eral rule and the bane of eighteenth century verse.

In the "Descriptive Poems" of John D. M'Kinnon, New York, 1802, the author misses this conversational tone and attempts a style too sublime for his very ordinary powers. The seventy-six pages of blank verse are divided into four parts: Part I is a description of the Hudson River; Part II of the Mohawk River; Part III of the scenery in the vicinity of New York in the month of October, and Part IV is a description of the city and its amusements in the winter. As the poem abundantly proves, M'Kinnon was a real lover of nature, but his admiration was sometimes displayed in such widely differing lines as

"th' illimitable plain
Depastured by erratic buffaloes."

and

"Exotic crops of grain
Rejoiced upon the plains—the orchards hung
Rich, studded with their pippins—in the meads,
Shorn of their hay, the yellow breasted larks
Melodious sung."

Of almost the same length, but in heroic couplet, is the poem called "The Foresters," by

Alexander Wilson,¹ the well-known ornithologist. It was published in *The Portfolio* and describes a three weeks' journey on foot to the Falls of Niagara which the author, together with a couple of friends, took in 1804, when he was engaged in his favorite study of birds. In the long tramp through the forest Wilson's keen eye takes note of many important facts in regard to the fauna and flora of Pennsylvania and New York. The poem is important, too, in depicting the life and character of the woodsmen and farmers who entertain the party along the journey,—in fact "The Foresters" contains a storehouse of valuable information both to the naturalist and to the student of early social conditions. As verse it is sometimes monotonous, but infused throughout and sustaining it is a reverent and almost Wordsworthian love of nature. When Ontario is reached the foresters take boat to Queenston. From there they go direct to the Falls. And then

"This great o'erwhelming work of Awful Time,
In all its dread magnificence sublime,
Rose on our view, amid a crashing roar,
That bade us kneel and Time's great God adore."

¹ Alexander Wilson was born in Paisley, Scotland, in 1766. He came to America in 1794, and died in Philadelphia in 1813.

In contrast with the real nature studies, based upon actual experience, of M'Kinnon and Wilson, are the more artificial and more formally romantic poems, in the manner of the "Philosophic Solitude," of Henry Pepper, Joseph Story, John Searson, and John Hayes. Henry Pepper's "Juvenile Essays; or, a Collection of Poems; inscribed to my valued friend, Henry MacNeale Kennedy," was published in Philadelphia, probably in 1800, although the exact date is not known. A versified sermon on "Christian Friendship," in imitation of Young's "Night-Thoughts," may be mentioned, in which advice is given to a friend under the name of "Fidelio," but the poem which chiefly concerns us is the "Solitude," in blank verse. It is conventional and formal, but underneath the veneer there can be detected a mind in tune with nature. "The liberty taken by a heated imagination of coining words," says Pepper, "will, no doubt, prevent their pleasing an indifferent eye," a thing which, however, is less objectionable than the sermon interjected near the close, which injures the unity and beauty of the piece. The following passage is typical:

"The gently rising hill,
Where simple village-swains attune the reed,

Or, with a tale of long-protracted end,
Amuse the ling'ring fair, their mingled flocks
Cropping the sav'ry herb, or with light bound,
Far-tripping o'er the jocund plain, till eve
Comes sober on, attended by a train
Of lengthen'd shadows, and the encrimsoned sun,
Just peeping o'er the welkin's farthest verge,
Warns of the dreaded hour, when graves emit
The shiv'ring ghost into the dunny vale,
And fairy-people throng in mazy dance,
Whose sacred revelries may not be scann'd
By mortal eye . . . So says hoar cottage faith,
The swains arise; each homeward leads his fair,
Both, speaking innocence and looking love,
Pledge mutual vows of constancy and truth."

In much the same manner, but with more evidences of a scholarly mind, is "The Power of Solitude" of Joseph Story,¹ the second edition of which was published in Boston in 1804.² "This work," says Story in his autobiography, "had very little success. The critics spoke unfavorably of it. Henceforward, I dropped poetry, except as an occasional amusement of a

¹ Born in Marblehead, Massachusetts, 1779. Died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1845. Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and an authoritative writer on law. Dane Professor of Law in Harvard College.

² In the first edition no date is given.

leisure hour; and I departed from its fairy realms with a humble belief that I was not destined to live even at the outskirts of its enchanted scenery. I took a lawyer's farewell of the muse, and following out the precepts of Blackstone, plunged at once into the dark labyrinth of the ancient learning of the law."¹ So thoroughly persuaded was Story that poetry was not for him that he bought up all the copies of "The Power of Solitude" which he could locate and burned them, as a consequence of which a copy of the work is now exceedingly rare. Elegiac in tone the poem is filled with the conventional subjects of this mood. Story loves to linger over

"The mouldering turret, or the moon-light main."

There is considerable suggestion of Rogers's "Pleasures of Memory" in portions of the poem, and the author's studious mind is exhibited in descriptions of historical instances of the effect of solitude upon famous people, chief of which Washington is described in his retreat at Mount Vernon. Washington is further eulogized in John Searson's poem called "Mount Vernon," Philadelphia, 1799, a poem

¹ "Life and Letters of Joseph Story," edited by his son, William W. Story. In two volumes, Boston, 1851. P. 107.

"rural, romantic and descriptive" as the author affirms. As already noted,¹ Searson is addicted to the excessive use of stopped couplets, except in paraphrase, and "Mount Vernon," being conventionally original, has all of the vices of the bard's worst moments.

The "Rural Poems, Moral and Descriptive," by John Hayes, Professor of Languages at Dickinson College, was published at Carlisle in 1807. The chief poem in the volume is one of a hundred and forty-four pages in blank verse called "A Description of The Seasons," and is in plan a direct imitation of Thomson, although the spirit of the piece is natural and sincere. Hayes has an observant eye, is considerable of a naturalist, and notes carefully the physical characteristics of New England. Moreover, there are a few passages of unusual descriptive beauty, while the references to American literature and its representatives, especially to the "Hartford Wits," are of much interest.

When studying the writers of a bygone time it is always of interest to know what they themselves thought of authors contemporary with them or who lived in a still earlier day. The "Profiles of Eminent Men," by Jonathan Mitchell Sewall, the author of that stirring

¹ See "Religious Verse."

Revolutionary song called "War and Washington," is a poem in which are briefly sketched forty-one portraits, mostly of the great writers of the world from Homer down, a majority being devoted to the best known men of letters of the eighteenth century. It is contained in Sewall's volume of "Poems" published in 1801 at Portsmouth, where the author practiced law until his death in 1808. The "Profiles" are eulogistic rather than critical, but are sufficiently outlined to show the results of wide reading and of a cultivated mind.

The author of "The Untaught Bard," New York, 1804, states that for certain reasons he cannot disclose his identity, and he still further complicates matters by a second assertion to the effect that he has "inserted a number of pieces from a different hand." The book is an attack on "the mechanic art" of Pope, and with a very few exceptions the meters employed are those of the most popular romantic poets. Two long poems, one on "War" and one entitled "Peace," are conventional in treatment; and the "Alfred and Leonora,"—"a beautiful little tale,"—is in reality a very silly story in which, following an afternoon call, the maiden, Leonora, is killed at the feet of her lover, Alfred, by a stroke of lightning. The only production

of consequence in the volume is a twenty-six-page poem in blank verse entitled "Spring," which is so much superior to the other poems that it seems more than likely it is one of the products of the "different hand." It is part contemplative and descriptive, part didactic and moral. If there is not genius in the poem there is at least proof of much more than ordinary ability, while that portion dealing with time, death, and eternity, rises in places to inspiration, and with little disadvantage to it can be compared with the tremendous sweep and solemn grandeur of "Thanatopsis."

Among critics of American literature it has been the general fashion, a fashion taking its rise in literary tradition rather than in actual acquaintance with the books themselves, of passing, with apologetic shrug, the entire body of American verse prior to Edgar Allan Poe, as being purely imitative and un-American. The unfortunate existence of this false tradition has discouraged the reprinting of works which we can ill afford to lose, and in thus keeping the actual works inaccessible to the general reader the tradition has served to perpetuate itself. Very few of the critics who generalize about this period have more than a hazy second-hand knowledge of the works under discussion.

Apart from a few fragmentary quotations here and there, many of the works are not to be had except after prolonged search in the files of a very few of our oldest libraries. In the preservation of the mental continuity of national history these productions are not to be despised. Openly imitative, it is true, many of them, of Pomfret, Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, and even of Chaucer and Shakespeare are the poems which we have discussed in the present chapter; but in the majority of cases the imitation is a surface imitation only, while both the subject-matter and the spirit of treatment are American. The "Hasty Pudding," the "Greenfield Hill," the Indian studies of Mrs. Morton, the nature studies of M'Kinnon and Alexander Wilson, are certainly not great poetry, but they are American in the best and truest sense of the term, while, as pure poetry, the early poems of Philip Freneau compare favorably in originality and power with the best productions of the first English romanticists. The time may come in some future period of American history when scholars will search for a fragment of this now neglected literature as eagerly as present scholars discuss a newly discovered metrical romance of the Norman French, or the authorship of "The Pearl."

(b) Moral and Didactic

Much of the moral enthusiasm of our forefathers is represented in a great body of verse which we have denominated "Religious Verse," an enthusiasm which, a few years before the outbreak of hostilities between England and the Colonies, gradually changed its medium of expression from the purely religious to the denunciatory and satirical. But where, in the earlier period, a strong sense of the artistic entered to modify the element of devotion and where, after the close of the war, the satirical temper smouldered back into something resembling the ante-bellum mood, we have a body of verse which is neither religious nor satirical, but which is better represented under the caption of Moral and Didactic.

Both because of their chronological position and because of the fame which they have acquired, the poems of Mrs. Anne Bradstreet deserve a foremost rank in this class of early American verse. The first American poet of any pretensions to the name was a woman, a Puritan living in the wilderness, whose inherited love of learning and love of the beautiful impelled her, while yet under thirty, and while engaged in the arduous task of rearing, unas-

sisted, and under primitive conditions, a family of eight children, to write a quantity of verse which many poets have not equalled in a lifetime of unremitting devotion to the Muses. And contrary to expectation, her verse is by no means all doggerel. Anne Bradstreet was possessed of the gift of the Gods, and had she not had the misfortune to come under the influence of the "Fantastics," thus subjecting her verse to the evil effects of far-fetched conceit and strained metaphor; had she been content to write naturally as in the "Contemplations," she would have left upon American literature much more than the impress of a contemporary reputation. Even as it is, many of her verses can now be read with pleasure. Born in England in 1612, and married at the age of sixteen to Simon Bradstreet, she came with her husband, in 1630, to America. In the party was her father, Thomas Dudley, afterwards Governor of the Massachusetts Colony, an honor to which Simon Bradstreet also attained. Anne Bradstreet's poems were published in London in 1650 under the then characteristically long title of "The Tenth Muse, lately sprung up in America; or, Several Poems, compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight: wherein especially is contained a complete Discourse and Description

of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year. Together with an Exact Epitome of the Four Monarchies, viz., the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman. Also a Dialogue between Old England and New concerning the late troubles with divers other pleasant and serious Poems. By a Gentlewoman in those parts." The first four of the poems are bound together in a unity of personified relationship much after the manner of the old Morality Plays. Thus the "Four Elements," of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water, become respectively the mothers of the "Four Humours in Man's Constitution," viz., Choler, Blood, Melancholy, and Flegme, which in turn are the mothers respectively of "The Four Ages of Man" or Middle Age, Youth, Old Age, and Childhood, and these, again, are mothered by "The Four seasons of The Year." In every case the abstraction appears before an imaginary tribunal and presents its own special claims for consideration. "The Four Monarchies" is little more than a poetical paraphrase of Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World" with parts taken from Archbishop Usher's "Annals of the World." These poems, taken together, consist of some two hundred and thirty pages of heroic couplet (Ellis Edition, 1867), two-thirds of which are devoted to "The

Four Monarchies." In the latter the author attempts the very thing for which, in the prologue to "The Four Elements," she confesses a lack of ability:

"To sing of Wars, of Captains and of Kings,
Of Cities founded, Common-wealths begun,
For my mean pen are too superior things."

Literary modesty was characteristic of Anne Bradstreet, and this, together with the fact that she was a woman—a novelty in literature at that time, and one calculated to stimulate critical gallantry—as well as because of her high connection in the colony, may in some measure account for the great popularity of her poems. Cotton Mather, in his "Magnalia," speaks of Anne Bradstreet as one "whose poems, divers times printed, have afforded a grateful entertainment unto the ingenious, and a monument for her memory beyond the stateliest marbles." Her compositions are suggestive of the student rather than of the poet, and while there is little ease of versification, there is, on the other hand, much evidence of wide reading, of a mind alert both to the lessons of history and to contemporary events, and of a temperament keenly sensitive to the influence of the natural world. Mrs. Brad-

street was no doubt familiar with the works of John Donne, George Herbert, and Francis Quarles, but the poet for whom she entertained the greatest admiration, and the one who was responsible for the worst of her defects as a literary craftsman, was the popular Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas,¹ to whom she dedicated a poem and whom she addressed as "The Pearle of France, Parnassus Glory." The most remarkable thing about Anne Bradstreet, however, is not that she wrote either a good or a bad poem, but that, under the circumstances, she should have had the audacity and the courage to conceive and finally to complete such an ambitious composition.

In the "Contemplations," written later in life, and when the author was less under the domination of the conventional, there is abundant proof of a more than ordinary poetic gift. With the exception of the mention of the nightingale, the descriptions are natural and true to New England, proportion is well maintained, and the imaginative sweep is broad and refreshing. The following stanzas are characteristic:

¹ The principal work of this author was a poem on the Creation, filled with the conceits characteristic of the school, of which a translation by Sylvester had been published in London in 1605, and a second edition in 1621.

"When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth (though old) still clad in green,
The stones and trees, insensible of time,
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen;
If winter come, and greenness then do fade,
A Spring returns, and they more youthful made;
But Man grows old, lies down, remains where once
he's laid.

By birth more noble than those creatures all,
Yet seems by nature and by custome cursed,
No sooner born, but grief and care make fall
That state obliterate he had at first.
Nor youth, nor strength, nor wisdom spring again,
Nor habitation long their names retain,
But in oblivion to the final day remain.

Shall I then praise the heavens, the trees, the earth,
Because their beauty and their strength last longer?
Shall I wish their, or never to had birth,
Because they're bigger, and their bodyes stronger?
Nay, they shall darken, perish, fade and dye,
And when unmade, soever shall they lye,
But man was made for endless immortality."

Such philosophy is to be expected in a Massachusetts Puritan of the seventeenth century, but we are hardly prepared to find the same temper in a poet of the early eighteenth, especially in James Ralph, who, in "The Tempest; or, The

Terrors of Death," London, 1727, attempts to prove

" that Death,
Though rob'd in Terrors is a latent Good."

The production is in blank verse, is dedicated to Sir Robert Walpole, and as reflective poetry is thoughtful and sincere,—a thing which cannot be said of much of Ralph's work. In the following year, 1728, was published "The Muses' Address To The King; an Ode," a poem of forty-three pages, in the preface to which, as in the preface of "Night," Ralph considered it necessary to record a defence of rhymeless verse. "An Ode in Lyrick numbers without rhyme is so odd and whimsical a thing in English, I'm told, that a Preface will be, in some degree, necessary to make an excuse to the publick for the innovation, and demonstrate the unreasonableness of such a liberty." "The Muses' Address" is an appeal to the King to aid literary merit, and from the almost sycophantic tone of the dedication it is not unlikely that Ralph was himself in need of ready money. The author conceives the great English poets as assembled before the King. Each receives a word of description. There is Chaucer's "rough unpolished muse"; Spenser, "fruitful of charms, but like a fertile soil,

choak'd up with useless weeds"; Shakespeare, "the Pride of nature, and the shame of art"; Milton, "with elevated front and eye sublime"; Cowley, "the Pindar of the Northern realms"; Dryden, "august with fame," and many others. As in all of Ralph's poems, there are occasional passages of good description. His conventional treatment of romantic scenes may be again noted.

Ralph was an American who had spent most of his life in England. George Cockings, on the other hand, was a Devonshire man whose experiences in America had inspired, in 1760, his popular and lamentable epic "War."¹ As a writer of didactic verse Cockings was more of a success. His "Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce," published in London, probably in 1766, is dedicated to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, at Adelphi, in which society the author held for many years the position of Registrar. Whatever "helps to aggrandize the British Trade" is the imperialistic theme which inspires this loyal son of John Bull. The American Colonies exist only as an aid to England's commerce:

"Oh! may the Americans for ever prove
Obedient children and deserve the Love
Of an indulgent Parent."

¹ See "Historical Verse."

Here and there is a suggestion that Cockings anticipates a certain amount of belligerent disobedience in these very Americans, something of whose liberty-loving nature he had learned while employed as an officer of the royal government in Boston. As is his custom, the author has accompanied the poem with voluminous notes, which, in their painstaking accuracy, are of some value.

Addressed to the members of the same Society, "To my Benefactors and Benefactresses; my Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen," is the poem called "Benevolence and Gratitude," London, 1772. By "benevolence" Cockings has in mind the benevolence of those members of the Society "who cast a commiserating look on the sons and daughters of affliction; heave the sympathizing sigh and, full of godlike pity, reach out to them the friendly hand of assistance." The "gratitude" is the author's own feeling towards all benefactors of mankind. The first lines of the poem are distinctively Cockingsesque:

"Descend Celestial Muse! my Song inspire;
With sentiments sublime my bosom fire,
To sing the gifts conferred on human race;
With gratitude the streams of bliss to trace,
Back to the fount of inexhausted love."

After such a prelude it would perhaps be the signal for merriment to say that the "Benevolence and Gratitude" is the best of Cockings's poems. And yet there are found in the work an unexpected sincerity, a stimulating optimism and a nobility of mind which place the poem much above the author's other compositions.

Twenty years later, in 1792, Francis Hopkinson's "Poems on Several Subjects" was published in Philadelphia, a volume which stands as a landmark in the literary history of eighteenth century America. In this collection was included a didactic poem called "Science," which had been originally printed in 1762. The poem is "Humbly inscribed to the Trustees, Provost, Vice-Provost, and Professors in the College and Academy of Philadelphia," and is an attempt to trace the educational development of a mind from early years on through university life. Science is conceived in its broader sense of general learning. Newton and Shakespeare are classed together as masters of science. It is interesting to note the Puritan echo in the line

"Without religion, learning is but vain,"

and to compare it with the Hellenism of such a line as

"Then Summer comes light-clad in glowing Red."

This conflict,—if such it may be called,—between the religious and the æsthetic, inherited from the Pilgrims, can be traced clearly in a large part of eighteenth century verse.

In 1792, also, was published in Boston, "The Progress of Refinement, a Poem, in Three Books," by Thomas Odiorne,¹ in which the æsthetic plays too small a part to suggest even the possibility of a conflict. It is a long, dull, didactic poem in blank verse treating respectively in its three divisions of the influence of nature, of the fine arts, and of virtue. The author must have been very young when he wrote the poem, for at the time of his death, in 1851, it is known that he had just completed his three score and ten. In the preface, indeed, he pleads his youth to the critics, but this excuse for literary defect was so common in the prefaces of our period that it is to be feared the "youth" of some poets extended far into the thirties.

A poem of some merit celebrating the achievements of the mariner's compass is the poem by Charles Pinckney Sumner² called "The Compass" and published in Boston in 1795. It was

¹ Died in Boston, 1851. Little is known of his life.

² 1776-1839. Born at Milton, Massachusetts. Graduated at Harvard in 1796. High Sheriff of the County of Suffolk. Father of Charles Sumner, the orator and statesman.

originally delivered at the Literary Exhibition at Harvard University in September of that year. The compass, he says, made possible the discovery of America and its subsequent unparalleled development. Sumner had no doubt but a faint vision of the tremendous strides in commercial prosperity which this nation was to make in the next hundred years, and yet some of the problems which are confronting the Republic to-day are foreshadowed in the poem:

“ But every good conceals a latent ill;
Beneath a sweetmeat lurks the fatal pill;
To share trade's blessings and its ills avoid
Has long the statesman's baffled schemes employed.
Ere long must Luxury's gaudy poison steal
Its nervous strength from Freedom's heavenly zeal;
Soon specious vice and every gilded art
To base venality corrupt the heart.
May weeping man the era never see,
When as is Carthage—shall Columbia be!
When glorious works of art shall mouldering lie;
And threat'ning Ruins hold the distant eye;
Statues of Washington shall sink in dust,
His name unrescued from oppressive rust;
Adams shall sleep, unhonor'd mid the dead,
And Hancock's broken column scarce be read.”

In contrast with this lugubrious picture, note the ring of patriotic pride in the closing lines of

"The Ruling Passion," spoken by Robert Treat Paine, Jun.,¹ before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard on July 20, 1797:

"When Asian kingdoms, whelmed in moral guilt,
By Terror governed, as on rapine built,
Like lost Palmyra, only shall be known
By sculptured fragments of Colossal stone;
When thou, as musing Tully paused and wept,
Where Syracuse and Archimedes slept,
With solemn Sorrow and with pilgrim feet,
Shalt trace the shades of Vernon's still retreat,
And as the votive marble's faithful page
Inscribes to Fame the Saviour of his age,
Shalt dew the knee-worn turf, with streaming eyes,
Where urned in dust, the mighty Fabius lies;
Thy realm, maturing 'mid the feathery flight
Of ages, trackless as the plumes of light,
In vigorous youth, the vital power shall prove
Of private Virtue ripening publick Love;
Which Aegis-like, shall more thy foes appal,
Than China's fence or Albion's floating wall;
Shall bid thy empire flourish and endure,
Thy people happy, and thy laws secure;
Thy Phoenix-Glory renovate its prime,
Extend with Ocean, and exist with Time."

¹ 1773-1811. Son of the Robert Treat Paine who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. The son was first called Thomas Paine, but since this was also the name of the famous atheist, by a special act of the Massachusetts Legislature the baptismal name was changed.

The biographer of Paine, Charles Prentiss, says of this work: "We know of no satire, of Horace, of Juvenal, Boileau or Pope that surpasses it. . . . The description of the fop, the pedant, the frail beauty, the old maid, and the miser, have, perhaps, never been equalled." This over-enthusiastic criticism is fairly representative of the esteem in which Paine's works were held by his contemporaries. Twelve hundred dollars was paid for "The Ruling Passion." For some of his poetry Paine received five dollars a line. Since then he has fallen into neglect, not altogether deservedly. Griswold's¹ criticism is as uncalled for in the one direction as is that of Prentiss in the other. Much of Paine's verse is, indeed, of little or no value, but in "The Ruling Passion," the longest and best of his works, there is a keenness of characterization, a brilliancy of wit, a mastery in the use of the couplet, and an abundance of well-directed patriotism which should go far in preserving the poem. The "Passion" referred to is that which rules the hearts of American citizens,—public spirit and patriotic devotion to the welfare of the Republic. After a number of personal types and passions are sketched and satirized from life, the poem closes in praise "of private virtue ripening public love."

¹ In "Poets and Poetry of America."

William W. Story in his biography¹ of his father, Joseph Story, says that the latter often spoke of the tremendous applause which greeted the lines on Washington in "The Invention of Letters" when Robert Treat Paine delivered them at the Commencement of Harvard University in 1795. The poem was dedicated to George Washington, from whom the author received a congratulatory letter after its publication the same year. It records the history of the transmission of thought from Cadmus down and concludes with the enthusiastic eulogy of Washington which resulted in the storm of applause mentioned by Story. Especially interesting is that part in which Paine attacks the Jacobins, a part which the authorities of the University had ordered him to omit, but which he read notwithstanding. The poem is over-learned, but contains some passages of power. The popular lines to which Story referred are worth quoting as evidence of the public feeling towards the First President:

"By Heaven ordained, ne'er in the sea of Fame
Shall sit the disk of thy resplendent name;
But like yon Arctick star, forever roll,
In ceaseless orbit, round the glowing pole.

¹ See note, p. 219.

Could Faustus live, by gloomy Grave resigned,
With power extensive, as sublime his mind,
Thy glorious life a volume should compose,
As Alps immortal, spotless as its snows.
The stars should be its types—its press the age;
The earth its binding—and the sky its page.
In language set, not Babel could o’erturn;
On leaves impressed, which Omar could not burn;
The sacred work in Heaven’s high dome should stand,
Shine with its suns, and with its arch expand;
’Till Nature’s-self the Vandal torch should raise,
And the vast alcove of Creation blaze!”

When Paine was asked how a volume whose types were stars and whose paper was the sky could finally be bound with the earth, he replied: “Pooh, you know obscurity is part of the sublime; it went down well; it took—marvellously.”¹

In 1797 there was issued from the press at Leominster, Massachusetts, a curious poem in four cantos called “The Ladies’ Philosophy of Love.” The author, Charles Stearns,² was a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1773 and was ordained in 1781, since which time he had been “Pastor of the church, and preceptor of The Liberal School in Lincoln.” Because this

¹ Addressed to Charles Prentiss, and quoted by him in his biography of Paine prefixed to the “Works,” Boston, 1812.

² 1752-1826.

serious spirit in which it was given. It is, as a matter of fact, most excellent advice without the least suggestion of prudery, and if, as here, the æsthetic element is almost wholly lacking, there is a large appeal to the moral and religious emotions—an appeal which, to minds of a certain temperament, is almost akin to the beautiful.

Four years later, in 1801, the "Original Poems" of Paul Allen¹ was published in Salem. Two didactic poems of some length and interest were included, both in heroic couplet, "The Pleasures of Literature" and "True and False Taste Contrasted." The first was delivered on the anniversary of the "Federal Adelpi" at the Baptist Meeting House in Providence on September 3, 1801, and is an intelligent and spirited discussion of those pleasures, a keen love of which possessed the mind of the author. The thought of the old student days at Brown University inspires four of the best lines in the poem:

"Give back that hour when morn, in glory strong,
Rose from the deep, and blaz'd the heav'ns along,
And saw my trembling taper, faint and pale,
Shed its last glimmer on some classic tale."

¹ 1775-1826. A native of Providence, Rhode Island. Graduated at Brown University. In 1796 went to Philadelphia, where he became a contributor to the *Port Folio* and the *United States Gazette*. At the time of his death was editor of the *Baltimore Morning Chronicle*.

The "false taste" alluded to in the second of the poems is the imitation of "Della Crusca's meretricious rhyme" and such "indefensible" books as Darwin's "Botanic Garden." True taste is to follow nature as did Shakespeare, Gray, Beattie, and Pope. The concluding line of the poem is a summary of the author's whole philosophy of verse:

"And Pope and Poetry preside once more."

Allen's poems, while seldom imaginative, show always ease of versification, considerable learning, and an active intelligence.

With much of that erudition which the author says a writer of didactic poetry should possess, is "The Powers of Genius," Philadelphia, 1801, by John Blair Linn, the author of "Valerian."¹ From the preface we learn that "it is the design of the following poem to draw no more than the general outlines of genius, to describe its progress, to ascertain the marks by which it may be known, and to give the prominent features of those writers who have excelled in its different departments." The eighty-six pages of heroic couplet are divided into three parts,—in Part I Genius is analyzed and the value of environment discussed; in Part II is treated the influence of

¹ See "Religious Verse."

education on men of genius; and in Part III is given a general historical survey of famous men, concluding with a descent of Genius and her address to America. "The Powers of Genius" was very popular and went through several editions both at home and abroad. The poem is the best known of the author's works and generally mentioned as being his best. The "Valerian," however, is a much superior poem in that "active imagination" which Linn says is "the infallible criterion of genius."

Of similar subject is "The Birth of Genius," the principal production in Mrs. Susanna Rowson's¹ "Miscellaneous Poems," Boston, 1804. Linn deals with the more modern aspects of genius; Mrs. Rowson interests herself in the traditions of mythology. Her theme is hackneyed, but is treated with some original fancy; there are felicitous touches of description and here and there a clever character-penciling. Linn was a greater poet, but his poem contains

¹ Born in England about 1762. Died in Boston 1824. Settled with her father, William Haswell, at Nantasket, from which place they removed to London upon the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. In 1786 married William Rowson. In 1793 came, as a player, to America, where she continued to reside until her death. A very prolific and vigorous writer. Author of "Charlotte Temple" and other well-known novels and plays.

no two lines of equal power with those of Mrs. Rowson where she describes

“ Ignorance, with vacant stare,
Laughing at what she never understood.”

In 1802, two years before Mrs. Rowson's volume of poems appeared, there was published in London a poem in eleven cantos by Edward Church, with the title “ The Inquisitive Traveller; a Poetic Essay, with Some Preliminary Religious, Political, and Moral Observations, analogous to The Different Subjects of The Poem.” A preface of one hundred and eighty pages, in which the author makes a spirited reply to some recent European comment on the intellectual inferiority of the American, is followed by fifty-two pages of elegiac stanza, interspersed with some heroic couplet, in which, like Rasselas, the author seeks for individual and social happiness. Like Rasselas, too, he has difficulty in locating the object of his search. Europe is drenched in blood; Robespierre is a representative tyrant; the Papacy an evil institution. China is the only country in the world where peace reigns, and it is to the Sovereign of China that “The Inquisitive Traveller” is dedicated. The verse is good and the reflection mature, though noticeably gloomy in tone. For the state the author

would have a cessation of war and an era of universal peace and good-will; for the individual there is but one safe guide to happiness, and this he finds not in religion, which "ever leans to some excess," but in morality, which is "Reason's purest gold."

A half satirical attempt to give an historic and philosophic basis to the ideas of liberty and equality is "A Poem on Liberty and Equality," Albany, 1804. The author, Daniel Rogers, at the time of writing the poem, was a student at Union College. His twenty-seven pages of octosyllabics but feebly elucidate his subject; they fathom, rather, the depth to which college verse can sometimes sink. A second poem on "Liberty" is that by George Heartwell Spierin, "student of law," whose "Poems" were published in Charleston in 1805. Spierin was born at Newburgh, New York, in 1787, whence the family moved to South Carolina. He was entirely educated by his father "which last circumstance reflects no small lustre on his character as a teacher." A precocious youth, he is said to have construed Cæsar at seven and Horace at nine years of age. The "Liberty," in which this youngster sagely states that civil liberty is the only genuine freedom and the only source of human happiness, was written at the

age of fourteen. A second part had been planned, but was afterwards abandoned. The poem has certain marks of the melodramatic, but it has also some touches of imagination, the verse is almost perfect, and the production is in every way remarkable for one so young.

“The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Marriage State, Represented under the Similitude of a Dream,” Stanford, 1805, by one Refine Weekes, is a long poem in heroic couplet, the scene of which is laid in Babylon. “Having had,” says the author, “the perusal of a pamphlet entitled ‘The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Marriage State,’ I was much entertained and edified therewith, and as Poetry is generally engaging to the minds of youth, and apprehending that it might perhaps be more extensively useful, I found an inclination in my mind to turn the said interesting piece into verse, which I have performed, as is exhibited in the following poem; yet have taken the liberty to make some variations and additions, where I apprehended the subject would admit of improvement.” The purpose of the poem is therefore apparently commendable, but the actual result is not such as to add glory to American letters. Chief of its many faults are its vagueness and obscurity.

It is unfortunate that so little is known of

the life of David Hitchcock, whose "Poetical Works" was issued in Boston in 1806, for what few facts are recorded concerning him are, in connection with his poems, such as to stimulate the greatest curiosity. His principal production, "The Shade of Plato," is, under the circumstances of its composition, and considering the very limited education of its author, a most remarkable poem. From a brief sketch of the author's life prefixed to the volume, we learn that David Hitchcock, the son of a poor shoemaker, was born in Bethlehem, Connecticut, in 1773; that he received some little schooling "when want of money or clothing did not prevent"; that after the death of his father in 1790 he worked for a time at farming; that he was next bound as a shoemaker's apprentice, where he learned the trade which was, so far as we know, to be his principal means of support for the remainder of his life; that he married at the age of twenty-six, and that at thirty-two he declared himself as living in "peace and contentment, with the addition of three children to his family, upon whom he dotes almost as much as the opulent do upon their riches." While these few facts are all that is known of the external life of David Hitchcock, "The Shade of Plato" is full of the history of a rich and abundant men-

tal life. The feat of Elihu Burritt, who is said to have acquired a dozen languages between the blows at the anvil, is less wonderful than what Hitchcock accomplished in the intervals of his task at the shoemaker's bench. "The Shade of Plato" is a philosophical poem of ninety-nine pages, in four parts, and in octosyllabics, which purports to be "A Defence of Religion, Morality, and Government." In answer to questions of the author, and in elucidation of different problems in the political and religious world, the Shade of Plato appears and speaks. The vocabulary is large, the choice of words excellent, the versification remarkably smooth. Moreover, the author must somewhere have found time to pick up a great deal of history and general information.

Less original than "The Shade of Plato," but with some learning and sound sense, is a poem by Restore Estlack,¹ called "Ethick Diversions. In Four Epistles to Emphasian, R. T.," New York, 1807. "I have," says the author, "long been an admirer of Pope's 'Essay on Man.' Reading this first suggested an idea of imitation. Several ideas merely hinted at by Pope were favorable to my project. I be-

¹ Some one has written on the title page: "Mr. Anderson regards Jansen as author."

gan writing to sacrifice a small leisure to the charms of poetry. . . . I do not have so great an opinion of melody as sense." The "Ethick Diversions" consists of fifty-six pages of heroic couplet, the four "Epistles" into which it is divided treating respectively of "Matters of Opinion and Principle," of "Society," a "Chapter of Rights," and "Death." Both the comprehensive and the imitative nature of the design are indicated in the opening lines of the poem:

"Cheerful let us the moral strain commence,
Enjoy the luxuries of mind and sense,
Talk of the past, the present still prolong
And call the future to account in song.
Chance may direct, or reason may impart
Opinion, principle, fact, nature, art,
Or we observe with philosophic eye,
Nor pass with erring speed our object by."

Estlack was a most loyal disciple of the old school. Undisturbed by the oncoming sweep of the Romantic Movement, he calmly announces that "had I more time my manner would have been more systematical and less natural."

Didactic poetry is seldom interesting to the lover of the imaginative in literature, and indeed it often seems that the two words imply an anomaly. But such verse has always been more

or less employed as a medium of expression, and never more so than in the eighteenth century. In this field of verse the American poets have again seized upon the English models of form to express their own original and individual thought. The poems which we have considered are valuable in the light they throw upon habits of thought as influenced by the social, political, and literary movements of the day. Although throughout this body of verse the Puritan element is strong and seriousness is the dominating note, yet the fact should not be overlooked that there is seldom narrowness of theme. On the whole there is a breadth of outlook and a broad-minded grasp of men and events which argues well for the mental caliber of our forefathers, who were interested as much in universal history as in problems of colonial government, and who could discuss the philosophy of Plato with as much intelligence as the state policies of Hamilton and Jefferson. The amount of illiteracy in the colonies was relatively small. A large proportion of the early emigration to New England was composed of men well educated in English schools, and trained in habits of fearless and independent thought. No sooner had they established themselves here than they began to found institutions of learning which should cher-

ish and guard for their children that very liberty of thought for which they themselves had sacrificed so much. Subsequent history has proved how well these institutions carried the responsibility imposed upon them. And just as the first colleges of New England, although in form modelled upon the English universities, developed a type of thought as broad and free as the continent upon which they were established, so the much vilified literary product of the time, while taking for its form the prevailing English models, was yet, in spirit and in thought, independent, liberty-loving, and thoroughly American.

CHAPTER V

TRANSLATION, PARAPHRASE, ETC.

THE excellent classical education which they had received in England or America often turned the attention of the colonists in moments of leisure to the history and literature of ancient Greece and Rome. So thorough had been this training that the scholars of those days, as has been noted, were often more proficient in the dead than in the living languages, and could write Latin hexameter with even more ease and smoothness than heroic couplet. It is not surprising, then, that in early American literature we find some attempt at original composition in the Latin language and many translations from Virgil, Ovid, and other of the more popular Latin poets. Occasionally, too, the thoughts of some modern author were translated into Latin. Frequent exercise in translation engendered a habit also of poetical paraphrase, some of the results of which it will be necessary to note.

As early as 1626 the popularity of Ovid ap-

pears in the history of American verse. In that year a translation of the "Metamorphoses" by George Sandys was published in folio in London, the first poem of distinction which was actually written in America. Before coming to Virginia the author had, like Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, gained some fame as a traveller in the East and had written a book concerning his experiences which was popular and of some value. In 1621 Sandys was appointed treasurer of the Virginia Company, and just before setting out for America the first five books of the translation were published in London, Charles the First having granted the author exclusive right to the translation for a period of twenty-one years. Upon the English Government assuming control of the Virginia colony Sandys was appointed a member of the council and was twice reappointed. In the meantime he purchased and developed a plantation, and in his leisure moments translated ten more books of the "Metamorphoses," the fifteen books being published complete in London in 1626, with a dedication to Charles the First, to whom he remarks that the work was "limned by that imperfect light which was snatched from the hours of night and repose." Sandys had made the acquaintance in London of Michael Drayton,

who later addressed to him a letter in verse in which he encouraged the translator on the banks of the James to "go on with Ovid as you have begun with the first five books." Sandys did much to perfect the heroic couplet. The compression of the translation into the same number of lines as the original was effected with some sacrifice to clearness, but the couplets are for that time remarkably smooth, and in the variation of the cæsura and in general mastery of the technique of this meter, Sandys anticipated and influenced Dryden and Pope, both of whom read the translation in boyhood, the latter being especially delighted with it.

George Sandys is the first poet of Virginia, as William Morrell had been of New England. He who deserves recognition as the first poet of New York is Jacob Steendam. In 1861, at the public sale of a library in The Hague, a poem in the Dutch language¹ was discovered, written by a colonist in New Netherland and sent over to Amsterdam for publication. Of the life of the author, Jacob Steendam, little could be learned. After diligent investigation it was found that he had been born in 1616,

¹ Translated into English by Henry C. Murphy in "A Memoir of the First Poet in New Netherland, with His Poems Descriptive of the Colony," The Hague, 1861.

probably in Enhuizen in North Holland, that he had travelled much, was for fifteen years in the service of the West India Company, and that he had finally settled in New Amsterdam. Where or when he died could not be ascertained. It was learned, however, that he was living in New Netherland the year that his first poem was published. In that year, 1659, the poem was printed at Amsterdam under the title of the "Complaint of New Amsterdam in New Netherland, to Her Mother, of Her Beginning, Growth, and Present Condition," and is a lament of the colony over the neglect which it had received from the parent city, Amsterdam. The daughter has been forsaken by the mother and left in the care of her sponsors, the West India Company. Notwithstanding the maternal neglect she has grown up to be both beautiful and rich, and so envied that her neighbor's swine (the English) are frequently turned in upon the land. She calls upon the mother for protection and for laborers to till the fields.

Two years later, in 1661, there was published in Amsterdam a second poem by Steendam, also in the Dutch language, entitled "The Praise of New Netherland. Wherein are briefly and truly shown the Excellent Qualities which it possesses in the Purity of the Air, fertility of the Soil,

Production of the Cattle, abundance of Game and Fish; with its advantages for Navigation and Commerce." Like the "Golden Fleece" of William Vaughan¹ it is written to encourage emigration to America. Set forth in a most favorable light, and by one who was apparently an ardent admirer of everything American, is a brief description of each of the products and of the natural features of the land,—of the fruits, vegetables, forest woods and minerals, and of the fish, the birds, and the larger animals. The "Spurring Verses," Amsterdam, 1662, a shorter poem by the same author, is little more than a summary of what had been said in "The Praise of New Netherland." The translator, Henry C. Murphy, has not a high regard for Steendam's poetic gifts, but thinks, inasmuch as this verse is the first of which we have knowledge in the colony, that "both for its priority in that respect and as an historical piece exhibiting the feelings and temper of the colonists at an alarming time, it claims a greater degree of attention than its poetical merits simply would entitle it to demand."

New York was not the only colony whose praises were sung. Pennsylvania was not lacking in poets who were eager to present the claims

¹ See "Religious Verse."

of the Quaker settlement. The enthusiastic "A True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania,"¹ by John Holme, has already been noted. After the death of Thomas Makin, in 1733, there were found among his papers two Latin poems in praise of Pennsylvania addressed to James Logan, one of which, the "Encomium Pennsylvaniae," bears the date of 1728, and the other, the "Descriptio Pennsylvaniae," that of 1729. Makin was an early settler in the Province, and in 1690 was appointed principal of the Friends' Public Grammar School in Philadelphia. He served also, several times, as clerk to the Provincial Assembly. The poems are in simple Latin and, as in Steendam's poems on New Netherland, describe the natural features and the products of the land, and also the government and society of the colony. A résumé of Pennsylvania history from the foundation of the settlement by William Penn, is a feature of the poem. It is interesting to compare again the attitude of Benjamin Thompson, the New England poet, towards the Indian, this time with the attitude of Makin, for the light that such comparison may throw on the different methods of treating the red man in various sections of the country. In the "New England's Crisis" the

¹ See "Historical Verse."

Indian was looked upon as a mere savage, warring against the best in civilization and deserving swift destruction. The Quaker poet, on the other hand, living in a colony famed for its just and generous treatment of the native inhabitants of the land, is impressed with the morality and nobility of the Indian, who is

"Scarce ever known to break the marriage tie."

Makin's verses conclude with a sentiment dear to the heart of every Quaker:

"In these blest shades may I delight to be;
Here little is enough, with peace, for me."¹

With an apology to Governor Calvert

"to excuse
This bold Intrusion of an unknown Muse,"

there was printed at Annapolis, in 1728, what purported to be the

"First essay
Of Latin Poetry, in English Dress,
Which Maryland hath publish'd from the Press."

¹ The translation is by Robert Proud, in his "History of Pennsylvania," Philadelphia, 1797-8.

The "unknown Muse" was a certain R. Lewis, and the work was a translation of the Latin mock-heroic of Edward Holdsworth¹ called "Muscipula; the Mouse Trap, or the Battle of the Cambrians and the Mice." The Lewis translation is not so good as the translation by Benjamin Young Prime, which, although written many years later, may be considered at this point in connection with the earlier poem. The poem by Prime is in six cantos of heroic couplet, the Latin verses and the English translation being placed on opposite pages. It is addressed to those connected with academies or universities in America, in the hope that it may "excite the youth of this country not only to the diligent and accurate study, but also to the thorough acquisition of the Dead Languages; the attainment of which has, of late years, become unpopular with a large portion of our countrymen, to the great loss of mental discipline, and the serious injury of the interests of literature and science." The "Mouse-Trap" is a satire on the Welsh, the hero of which is supposed to be St. David, Archbishop of St.

¹ 1688-1747. An Oxford scholar. Other translations of the "Muscipula" are those by J. Hoadley in "Dodsley's Miscellanies," Volume V, in the poems of Dr. Cobden, and in the poems of Benjamin Young Prime.

David's. "The great moral of the story," to use the words of the translator, "is this; that art and stratagem can perform with ease that which force, in all its forms, attempts in vain."

The narrative is simple and amusing. Wales being overrun by mice, many plans are considered for getting rid of the pests. At last one Taffi, "a smith and senator," unexpectedly solves the problem. Having eaten some cheese and dropped off to sleep, a mouse smells the savory food and quietly enters his open mouth. Taffi awakes, closes his mouth, and imprisons the mouse. Thus is invented the mouse-trap. The Latin of the "Muscipula" has been adjudged excellent by classical scholars, and the translation by Prime rivals it in simple, clear, and vigorous verse. The poem is clever and entertaining, and is much superior to the average verse of the day.

In 1759 there was published at Boston "A Paraphrase on Part of The Oeconomy of Human Life. Inscribed to His Excellency Thomas Pownall, Esq., Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay," a poem of eighty-six pages in heroic couplet by James Bowdoin. The author was born in Boston in 1726, of Huguenot descent, and was educated at the South Grammar School and at Harvard, where he graduated in

1745. He was ardent in his advocacy of a union of the colonies, and in 1785 became Governor of Massachusetts. Bowdoin was not only prominent in the political affairs of the colonies, but he was also deeply interested in scientific and literary matters. He gained considerable fame through his coöperation with Benjamin Franklin in experiments with electricity, was honored with membership in the Royal Societies of London and Dublin, and was one of the founders and the first President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He died in 1790.

Bowdoin's love of letters prompted him to attempt several original compositions in verse, principal of which is the "Paraphrase" to which we have already alluded. The author of the collection of aphorisms known as the "Oeconomy of Human Life" was for a long time thought to have been Dodsley, and so Bowdoin thought, but it now appears to be the more general opinion that not Dodsley, but Lord Chesterfield, was the real author. In the preface to the "Paraphrase" Bowdoin declares that "the first draught of it was only a versification of the 'Oeconomy'; but the author having since considerably enlarged it without regarding the original, it cannot be called in its present state a versification. And even the title it now bears 'a Para-

phrase' does not properly belong to it, for tho' in some parts of it, it may be a paraphrase; in other parts, the matter is not the same." In the treatment of such subjects as "Wise and Ignorant," "Magistrate and Subjects," "Religion," etc., there is obtained an intimate glimpse of Governor Bowdoin's own strong personality, a personality which led captive both Franklin and Washington, and his reflections, moreover, are indicative of the general nature of the thought movements of the time. A praiseworthy feature of the work is the simplicity of the versification, which savors much less of conventionality than might naturally be expected in a paraphrase, especially in a paraphrase of the eighteenth century. The poem displays little pure imagination, and is mainly meditative, philosophical, and hortatory.

Bowdoin was also a contributor to the "*Pietas et Gratulatio*,"¹ published in Boston in 1761. Upon the death of George the Second and the accession of George the Third in 1760 many of the English universities sent eulogistic poems to the new King. A few months later, on Satur-

¹ For the data of this work I am indebted largely to the study of Mr. Justin Winsor, entitled "*Pietas et Gratulatio. An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Several Pieces*," Cambridge, 1879.

day, March 14, 1761, at the suggestion of Francis Bernard, the royal Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, the following notice was posted in the chapel at Harvard:

“ Proposal,
for a celebration of the Death of the late King,
and the accession of his present Majesty by
members of Harvard College:—Six guineas are
given for a prize, of a guinea each, to the author
of the best composition of the following several
kinds:—A Latin Oration, A Latin Poem in
Hexameters, A Latin Elegy in hexameters and
pentameters, A Latin Ode, An English Poem
in Long Verse, and an English Ode.”

Thirty-one compositions were submitted, exclusive of the introductory address to the King, were printed entire, and were sent to England under the title of “*Pietas et Gratulatio*,” as America’s scholarly contribution to the general felicitation. Three of the poems were in Greek, sixteen in Latin, and twelve in English. Although the separate pieces were written, for the most part, by the faculty and graduates of Harvard, the book as a whole smacks strongly of the sophomoric. The inevitable eulogy, if not actual flattery, of such a composition is tempered in

the preliminary address to George the Third with some excellent advice which, as after events proved, was anything but prophetic: "Other empires have generally been formed by the infringement of the liberties and the destruction of the lives of mankind; that which will owe to your Majesty its firm establishment, will be founded upon the maintenance of the freedom of the people, the security of their possessions, and the increase of their numbers."

So far as is known the King took no notice whatever of the congratulatory volume which had been composed in his honor, with so much pains and patriotism, by loyal subjects in America. The English magazines were more courteous. The *Critical Review*¹ took favorable notice of the poems and the *Monthly Review*² commented as follows: "It must be acknowledged, after all, that this New England collection, like other public offerings of the same kind, contains many indifferent performances; but these, though they cannot so well be excused when they come from ancient and established seats of learning, may, at least, be connived at here, and what we could not endure from an illustrious University, we can easily pardon in an infant Seminary." The Latin poems are more creditable than the Eng-

¹ October, 1763, p. 289.

² July, 1763, p. 22.

lish heroic couplets, some of which are smooth and polished, but all absurdly conventional. The spirit of excessive and formal adulation in which they are written largely destroys, too, any artistic value which the poems might otherwise have had. Nevertheless, as a group of poems illustrating the temper of the American people towards English sovereignty a decade and a half before the battle of Lexington, and as a memorial of the state of university culture in America in the middle of the eighteenth century, the " *Pietas et Gratulatio* " will ever remain an object of scholarly interest.

James Bowdoin had contributed to the " *Pietas et Gratulatio* " at least three of the thirty-one pieces,—the eighth, ninth, and seventeenth, the two first being Latin epigrams and the other in English heroics. Another contributor to the same volume was Stephen Sewall, who has been called " the most accomplished classical scholar of his day which our college or country could boast." ¹ He was born at York, Maine, in 1734, was a graduate of Harvard, and later was appointed Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages in that institution, a position which

¹ Thaddeus Mason Harris, Librarian at Harvard from 1791 to 1793, in a manuscript letter to Professor George Ticknor, Dorchester, April, 1828.

he held for twenty years, from 1765 to 1785. Besides being the author of the Latin verses mentioned, Professor Sewall published "Nocte Cogitata," Caroloppidi, Massachusetts, 1786, a seventeen-page translation into Latin hexameter, of the first book, "De Vita, Morte, et Immortalitate," of Young's "Night Thoughts."

"The Story of Æneas and Dido Burlesqued: From the Fourth Book of the Æneid of Virgil," by one Rowland Rugely, was published in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1774. Even the impending crisis of the Revolution could not entirely destroy the exuberance of spirit which burlesque implies and the pleasure which men took in the companionship of the classics. Rugely's poem consists of ninety-four pages of octosyllabics, for the most part witty and sometimes a little vulgar, the whole strongly suggestive of the general manner and spirit of the burlesques of John G. Saxe.

The extraordinary vogue which the so-called poems of "Ossian" had in England and on the continent was duplicated in America, for the romantic temper was as potent and as widespread on the western shores of the Atlantic as in Kent or Sussex. The little volume of poems purporting to be fragments of the ancient Erse language was published by Macpherson, the

Highland schoolmaster, in 1760. It is not, however, until after the Revolution that there is much evidence of its influence in the history of American verse. In the "Poems of Arouet," Charleston, 1786, by John Brown Ladd¹ there is a translation from Ossian, in mixed meter, of "The Battle between Swaran and Cuthullin," a translation which misses the spirit of the original, but which is even then noteworthy because of the extreme youth of the author.

Ladd's brief life offers some points of interest. He was born at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1764. At the age of ten he was writing verses, but did not attain public notice until some years later when, as an employee of a printing office, he began to burlesque certain quack doctors of the town. The success of these efforts prompted him to write a humorous ballad on the Rev. Dr. Hopkins of Newport, a proceeding which brought that worthy gentleman in hot haste to the elder Ladd's door and resulted in the son's withdrawal from the printing establishment. After a course in medicine, and through the advice and influence of General Greene, Ladd finally settled in Charleston, South Carolina, where he soon became possessed of a lucrative

¹ A sketch of his life, by W. B. Chittenden, was prefixed to the 1832 edition of his poems.

practice. In 1786 he unfortunately became engaged in a controversy over politics, and his opponent challenged him to a duel. Ladd discharged his weapon in the air, but he himself received a mortal wound. Thus at the age of twenty-two ended a life which, while not offering possibilities of greatness, yet gave promise of distinction in American literature. Ladd's temper was essentially romantic. Both his life and death were romantic, his poems evince an unconventional love of nature, and the fascination which the romantic past exerted upon his impressionable mind is shown in his translation of Ossian.

Perhaps it is because of youth also that John Blair Linn fails in his translation of Ossian, for in 1795, when the "Miscellaneous Works" was published, in which the translations occur, the author was but eighteen years of age. The translation is technically accurate, but the meter in which both the "Oithona" and "The Death of Cuthullin" are written, the heroic couplet, is not a meter best adapted to the dignity and majesty of Ossian. The author's choice of epithet is conventional, in fact many of the words are almost meaningless and are put in apparently for the sole purpose of completing the meter, and there is small indication in these youthful effu-

sions of the poetic power which was to characterize the future productions of Linn.

Five years later, in 1800, there was published in Philadelphia "The Death of Washington. A Poem. In Imitation of the manner of Ossian," also by Linn, wherein the trite epithet disappears and in its place is found something of that picturesque force which we have noted in "Valerian" and in "The Powers of Genius." The so-called "Poem" consists of twenty pages of poetic prose after Macpherson's style, in which Washington is characterized as Fingal and in which many of the words and phrases are taken direct from Ossian. The opening lines give the general manner: "The Bard of the feeble hand now strikes the harp. He loves the song of Ossian and would sing like him. But the harp of Ossian was buried with him, and none again can awaken his song."

Although composed in heroic couplet, the "Translations from Ossian," by William Munford,¹ in his "Poems," Richmond, 1798, is a great improvement over the translations of Ladd and Linn. Munford has caught something of the wild, weird spirit of the original poems. His translation extends to some forty pages, all of which is readable. Munford was also a great

¹ See "Political Satire."

admirer of Horace, but the work upon which he lavished his greatest devotion was a translation of the "Iliad," not published until 1846, twenty-one years after his death, when it was printed in Boston in two volumes. Blank verse, the measure which he adopted, was also the measure used by Cowper in his translation of the "Iliad," although Munford declares that at the time of undertaking his own work he had not seen that of Cowper. Munford's translation is careful and conscientious. The work received general notice upon its publication, for the most part favorable.¹

The most ambitious of the compositions of Jonathan Mitchell Sewall, whose Revolutionary song called "War and Washington" attained such great popularity, was his early translation of Ossian. Believing in the authenticity of the poems as against Doctor Johnson and his party, his fancy was captivated by this strange and romantic melody of the north. Macpherson's prose translations had fallen into Sewall's hands as early as 1770, and he immediately began to turn them into verse. It was his intention later to publish a versified translation of all the Os-

¹ Reviewed in *North American Review*, No. 132; *Whig Review*, October, 1846; *Christian Examiner*, September, 1846. (Duyckinck's Notes.)

sian poems in two octavo volumes, a plan, however, which was never carried into effect. The "Miscellaneous Poems, with Several Specimens From the Author's Manuscript Version of the Poems of Ossian" was issued from the press at Portsmouth in 1801. The volume contains translations of "Carthon," the "Song of Selma," part of "Carric-Thura," the "Battle of Lora," and the first and third books of "Fingal." The author has an easy command of the couplet, but even then the movement is too rapid and uneven to adequately convey the mood of Ossian.

"A Versification of President Washington's excellent Farewell Address, to the Citizens of the United States. By a Gentleman of Portsmouth, N. H.," was published at Portsmouth in 1798. It is the work of Sewall and is a conscientious paraphrase of Washington's address in forty-six pages of very ordinary verse. But the author is modest, he disclaims any ability as a poet, and says that his mission will be accomplished if the paraphrase solicits only "a reperusal of the admirable original."

A paraphrase which misses both the ease and the floridity of style of the work upon which it is based is the poem called a "Poetic Paraphrase of Hervey's 'Meditations among the Tombs,'" by John Searson, in his "Poems,"

Philadelphia, 1797. Something of the author's life is given in the preface. Searson was born in Ireland, whence at an early age he came to America, where he resided for twenty-one years, engaging, toward the end of that period, in wholesale trade in Philadelphia. This business at length failed and Searson returned to Ireland, where he succeeded in obtaining an appointment as master of the free school at Colerain, a position which he retained for fifteen years. At the end of that time the school was given to another and Searson again came to America, where he then composed most of his poems, among them the poetic paraphrase of the "Meditations," addressed to John Adams, a composition of seventy-eight pages in the inevitable heroic couplet. While not so bad as "Mount Vernon," this work is much inferior in style to the "Paraphrase on part of the Book of Job."¹ Its chief fault, as in "Mount Vernon," is its lack of fluidity, due mainly to the almost unbroken use of end-stopped couplets.

A translation of the first book of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" is included in the "Collection of Plays and Poems by the Late Col. Robert Munford, of Mecklenburg Co., in the State of Virginia," Petersburg, 1798. Robert Munford is the father of the William Munford who trans-

¹ See "Religious Verse."

lated Ossian and Homer. In the preface to the "Metamorphosis" the son, by whom the volume is edited, explains that his father "intended to translate the whole work, but death put an end to his design." The part which was completed is a fairly correct translation of average ability, in no way so good as the translation by Sandys.

"The Culex of Virgil; with a Translation into English Verse," Boston, 1807, was the work of Lucius M. Sargent. The author was born in Boston in 1786. He spent two years at Harvard and afterward studied law, but did not practice. During the last thirty years of his life he was known as a lecturer and writer in the cause of temperance. The classics were his early favorites and he was only twenty-one when, in 1807, he published his "Translations from The Minor Latin Poets." The translation of the Culex of Virgil extends to some sixteen pages of heroic couplet, an accurate translation, but of no poetic beauty.

In 1806 there were printed in New York translations of Juvenal and Berni, the one by John Duer,¹ the other by Richard Alsop.

¹ Probably John Duer, the jurist, 1782-1858, at one time Chief Justice of the State of New York and author of several works on insurance law.

Duer's translation is that of Juvenal's third satire, a type of verse whose spirit is more easily caught by the heroic couplet than are the rhapsodies of Ossian or Hervey. The translation is as nearly literal as the use of rhyme permits. "The Enchanted Lake of The Fairy Morgana. From the Orlando Inamorato of Francesco Berni" was one of several translations by Alsop, many of which still exist only in manuscript. The fame of Francesco Berni, one of the greatest of Italian comic poets, rests chiefly upon his recasting (Rifacimento) of Boiardo's "Orlando Inamorato." The first edition of Berni's work appeared in 1541. The part selected by Alsop is an episode from the second book, and as translated into heroic couplet runs to a length of forty octavo pages. "This version, not originally intended for publication," says the author in the preface, "is chiefly designed to give some idea of that celebrated and singular poem, and is the first specimen of equal length, he presumes, that has hitherto been presented to the English reader. Though the entire work is not, in his opinion, susceptible of an English dress; he proposes, should this be received with approbation, occasionally to furnish such other selections, as may appear best suited to the public taste. With respect to the style of the version, the translator

readily acknowledges, that he has in some instances been induced to imitate that adopted by the late ingenious Mr. Way, in his version of the *Fabliaux*, which from the occasional introduction of antiquated words, he conceives admirably adapted to this species of composition, and best suited to the genius of the original."

In whatever he undertook Alsop usually achieved a goodly measure of success and the translation of Berni is no exception. The vivacity and cleverness which gave distinction to his contributions to "The Echo," are present here, with that added flavor of the mediæval for which he consciously strove in his adaptation of the language of the *Fabliaux*. In recounting these adventures of long ago the author takes a manifest delight, and is unhampered by that self-consciousness and stiffness of expression which are the most common faults of the inexperienced translator.

With the exception of the "Metamorphosis" by Sandys, no translation written in America between the years 1625 and 1807 has had more than a temporary influence and popularity. The translations of Bowdoin and Alsop deserve special note for the excellence of the workmanship, and were much admired in their day, but their appeal has passed with the passing of the literary

tastes and fashions which gave them birth. The two-volume edition of the "Iliad," in English dress, by William Munford, is important because of the seriousness of the effort, because of the apparent favor with which it was received, and because of its subsequent wide circulation, an influence, however, which was not operative, because of the delay in publication, until long after 1807. No single influence in the translations of this period is so marked as is the influence of Ossian, a fact which testifies to the vigor and appeal of the new Romanticism. The Dutch poems of Steendam, the first poetic productions of New York, should not be forgotten, nor the poems of the "Pietas et Gratulatio," the latter as interpretive of political and educational conditions in 1761.

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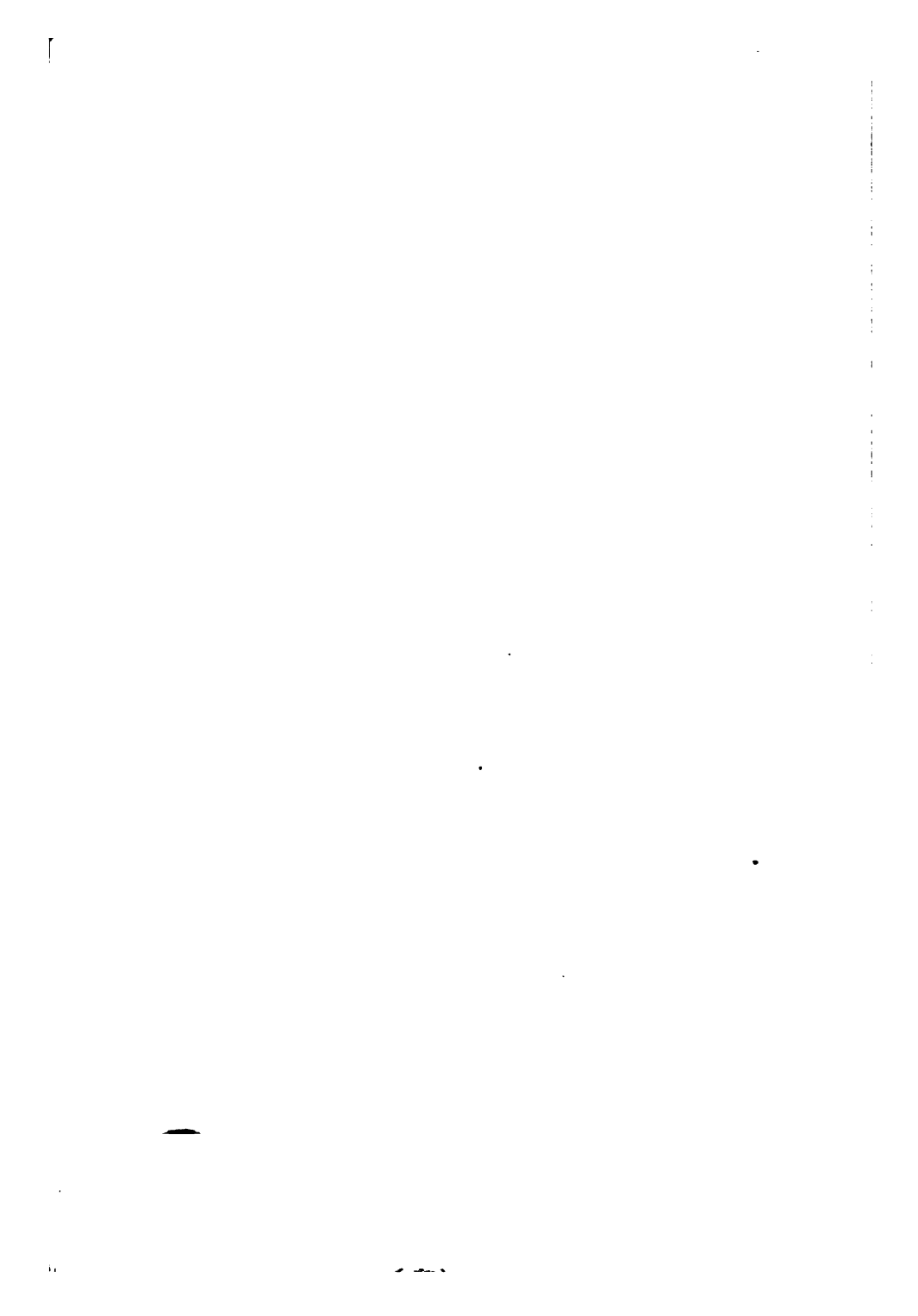
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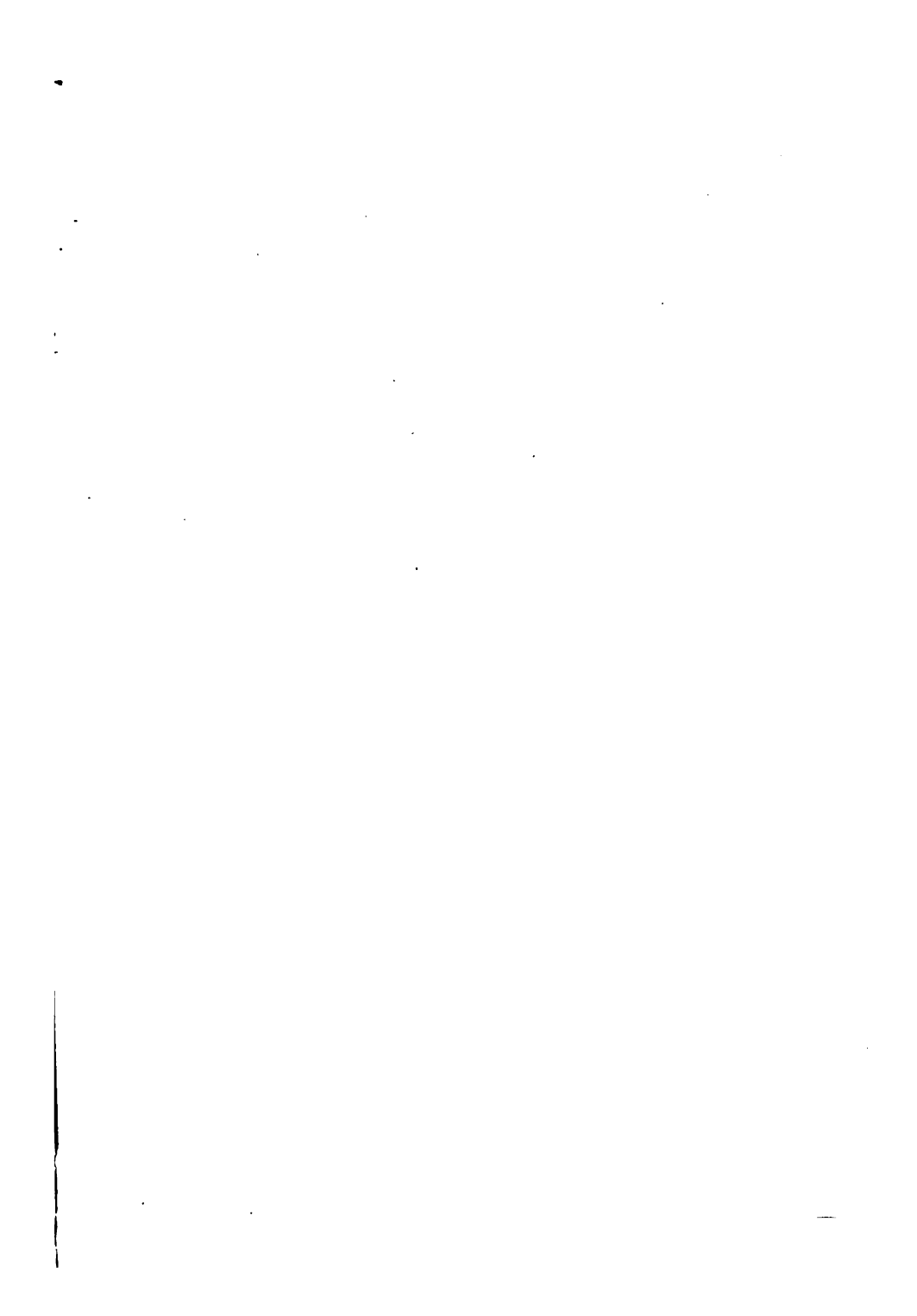
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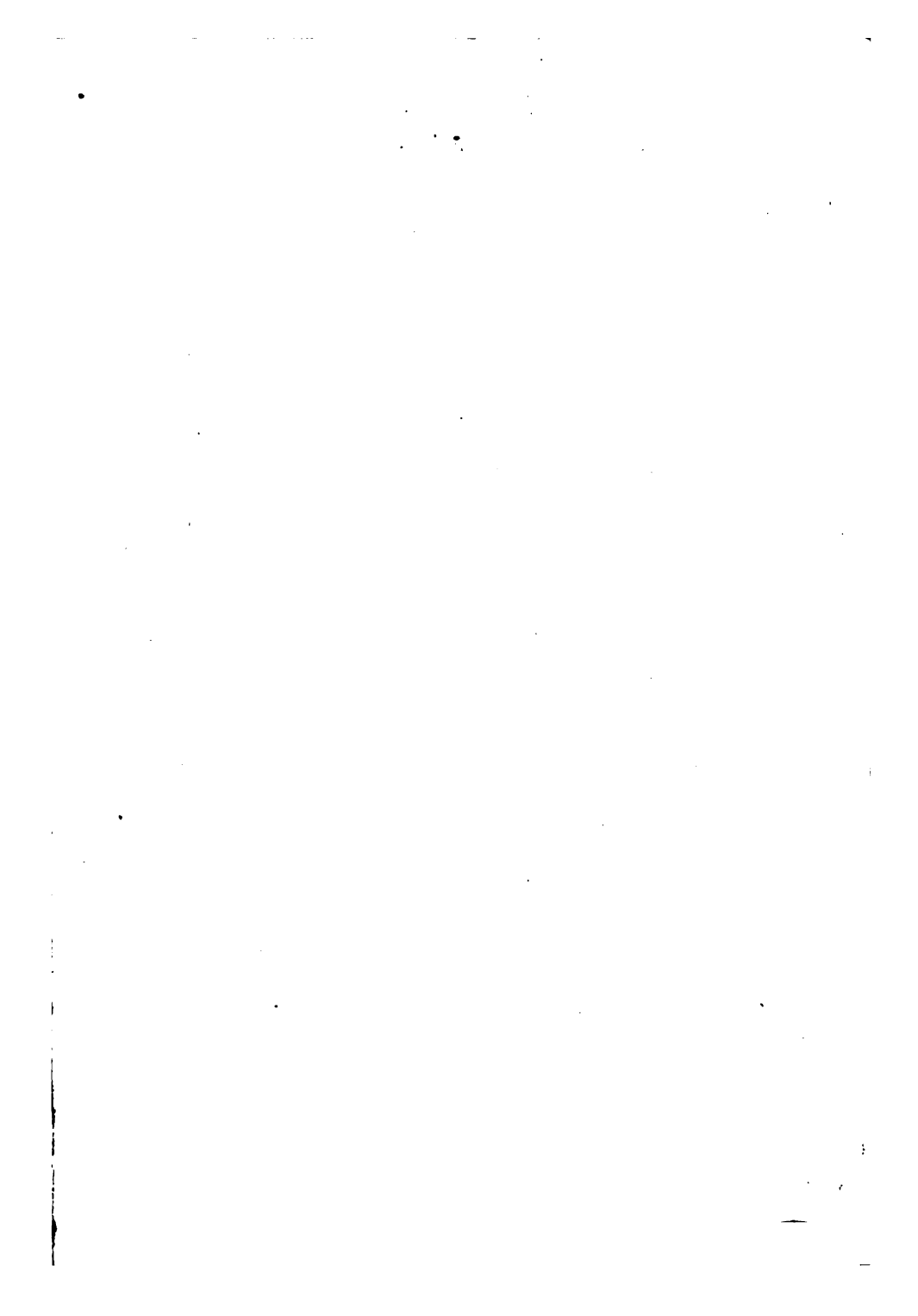
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